PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT



Takehiko Inoue

Based on Eiji Yoshikawa's *Musashi*

2

Three in One

Vagabond

VIZBIG Edition
Volume 2

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Vagabond

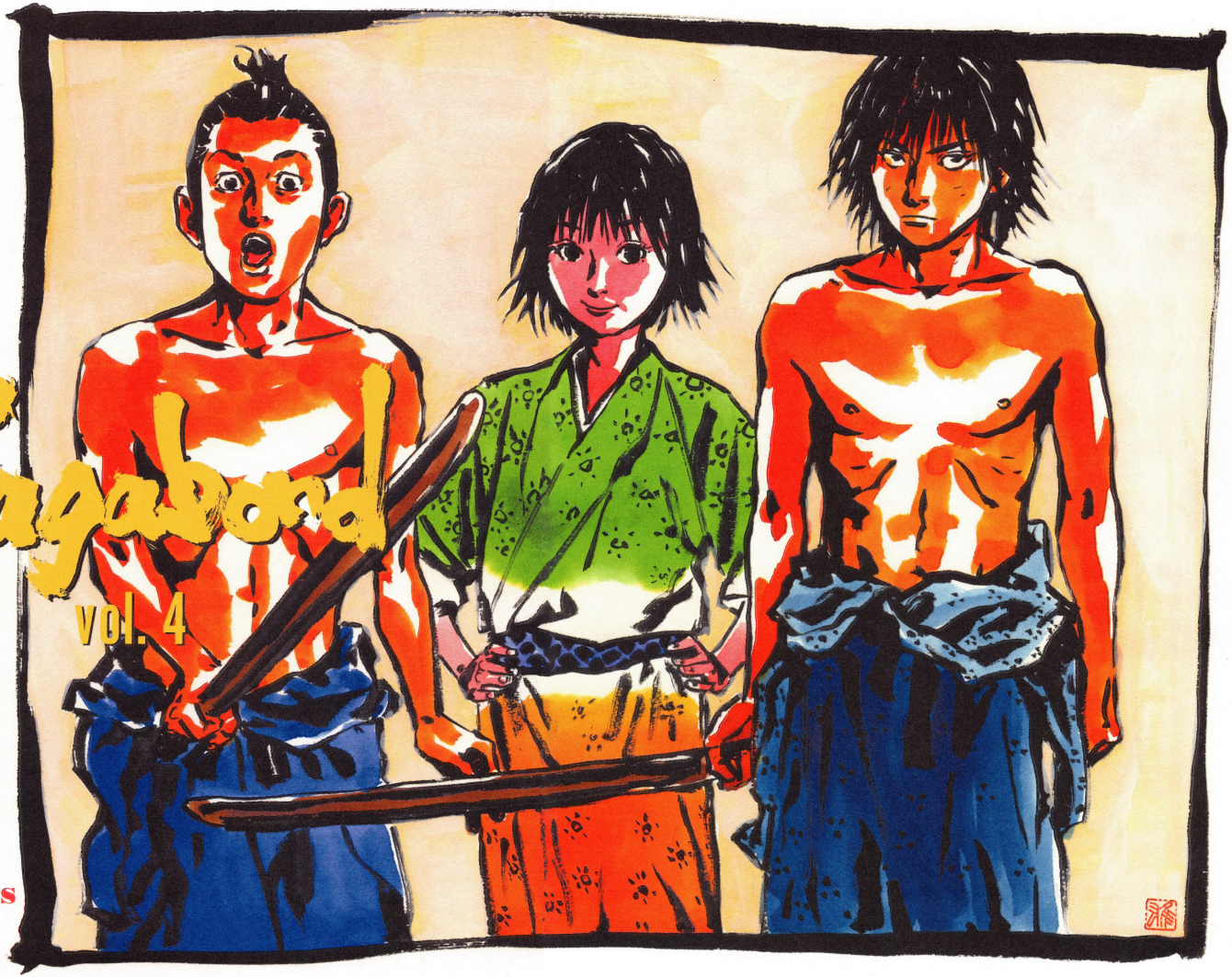
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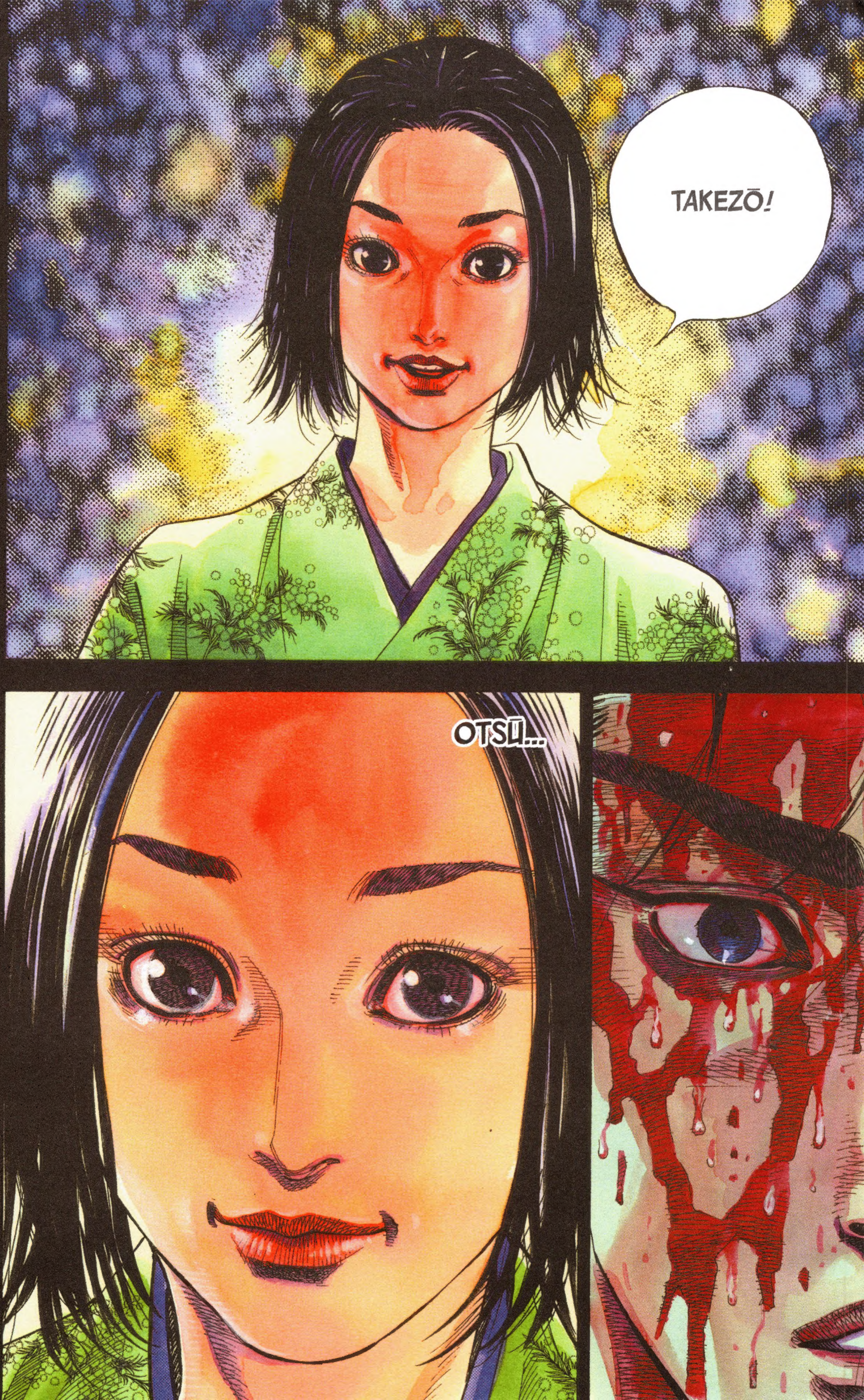
Takehiko Inoue
Based on Eiji Yoshikawa's *Musashi*


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF



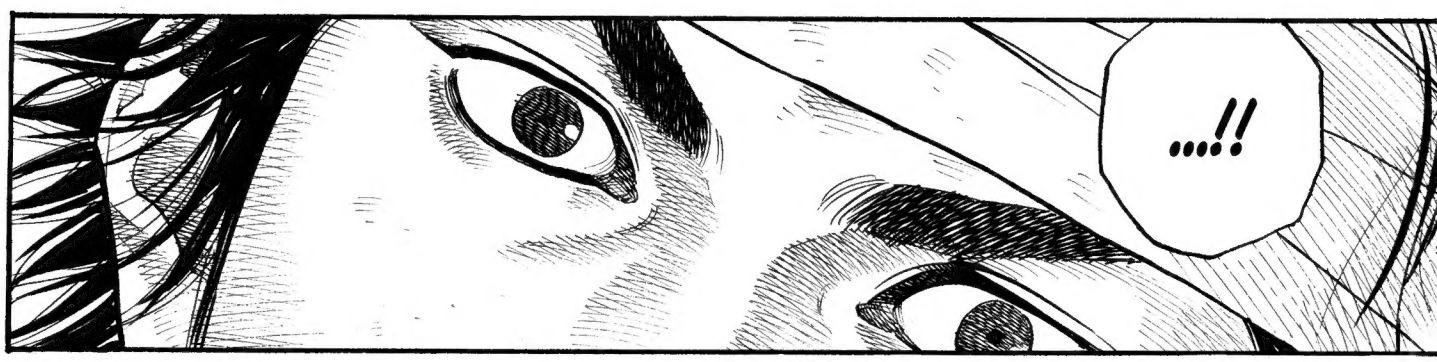
#32

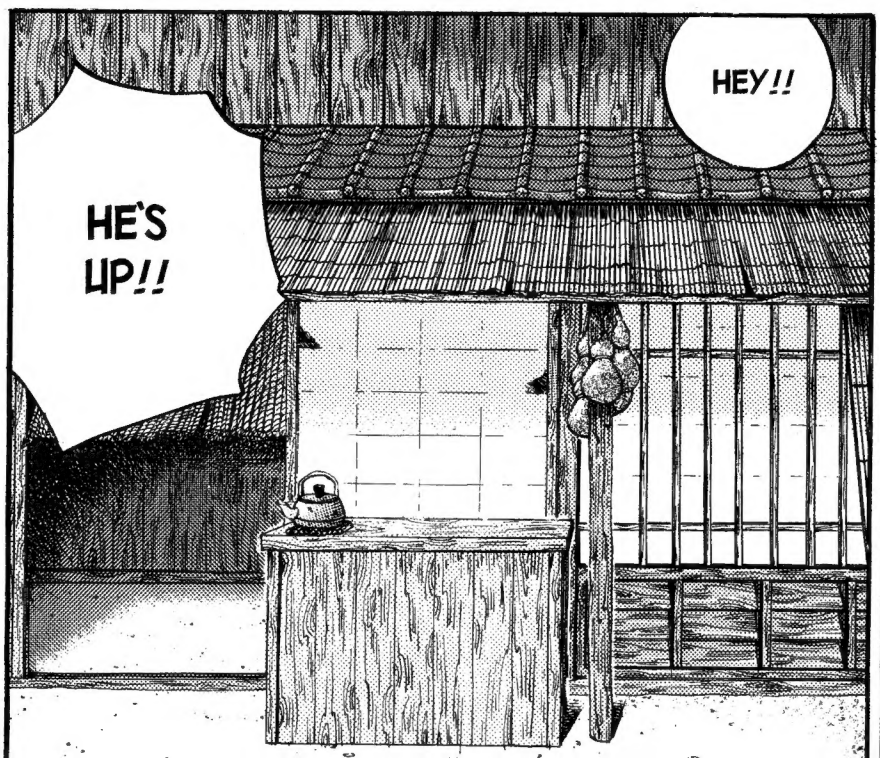
Wanderers


TAKEZŌ!
OTSŪ...


TAKEZŌ!
OTSŪ!
OTSŪ!
HUGG




...!!


HEY!!
HE'S UP!!


HEY!!

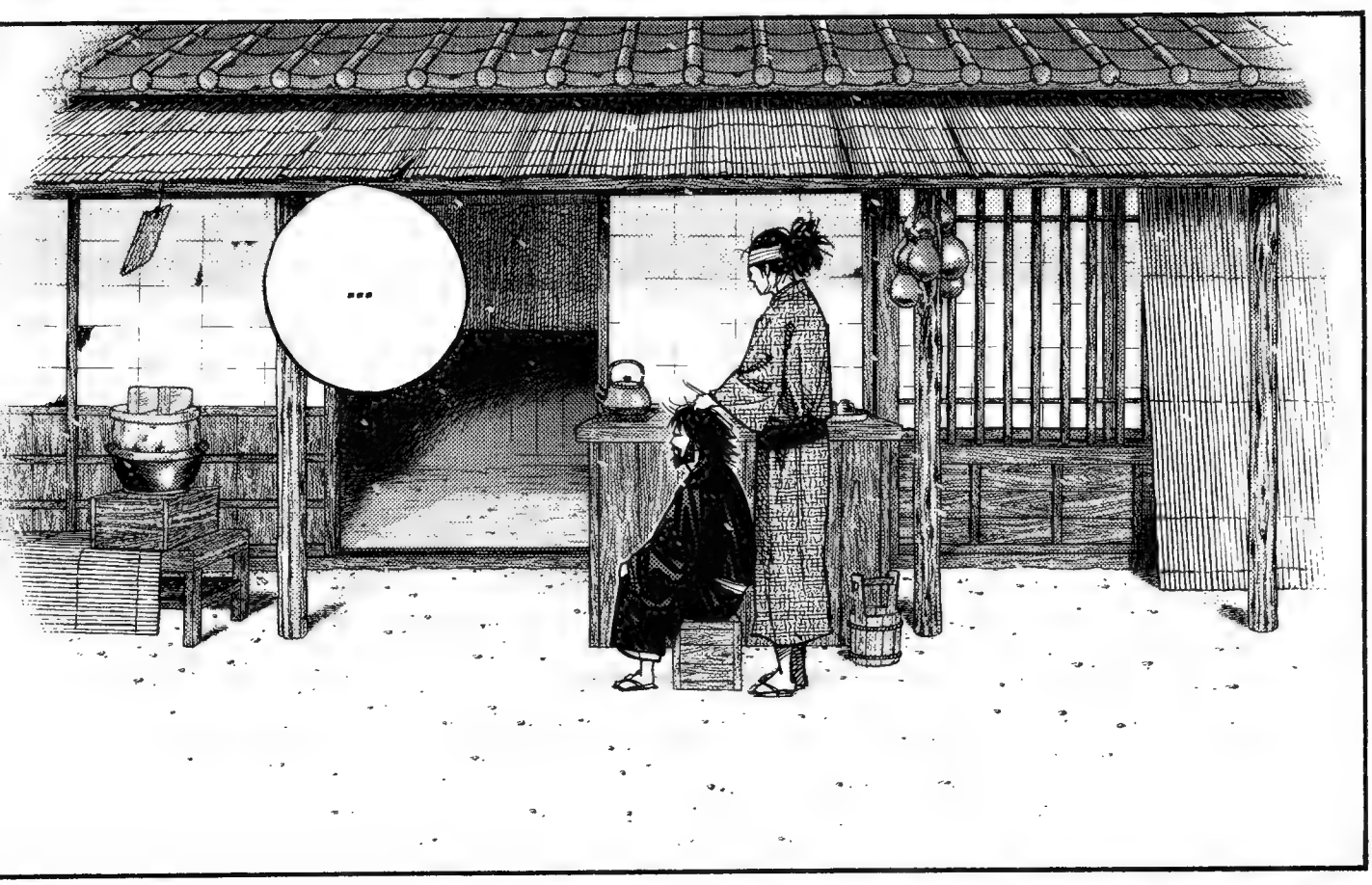

OUCH!
TAKE IT EASY.
YOUR WOUNDS HAVEN'T HEALED YET!!
THIS KID DID A GOOD JOB OF NURSING YOU BACK TO HEALTH.
YOU'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR THREE DAYS...
YOU LOST A LOT OF BLOOD FROM THOSE CUTS ON YOUR FOREHEAD AND CHEST.
YOU SHOULD THANK HIM...
WHO ARE YOU?
AND HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
...!?
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...!!
HUH!?
DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?
HUH!?


EH, TAKEZŌ!?
YOU'RE AS RECKLESS AS ALWAYS!!
SMIRK


TAKUAN!!
HM...


HUH!?
DAMN MONK...




...


SNIP
SNIP

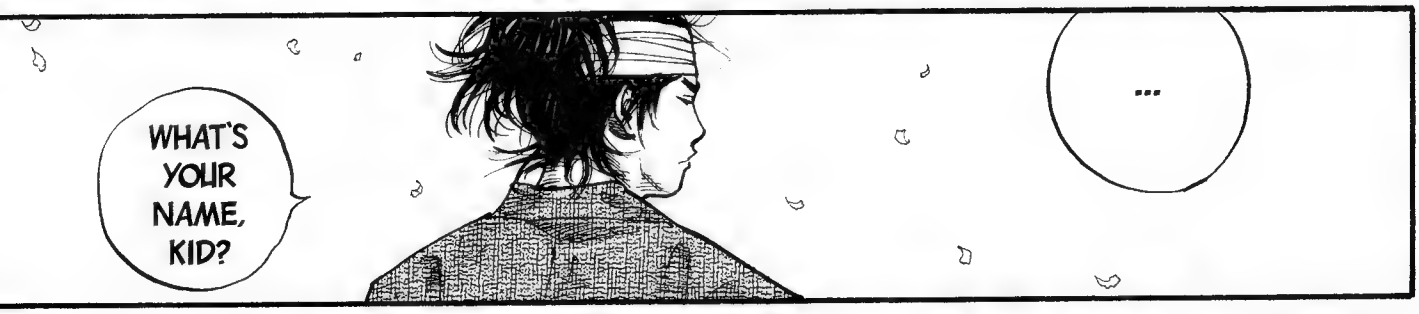

I FIGURED THERE'D BE A LOT OF STRONG SAMURAI HERE.
HM...
SO YOU CAME TO KYOTO...
FWICH
...TO HONE YOUR SWORDSMANSHIP SKILLS?


DON'T YOU REALIZE HOW PRECIOUS LIFE IS?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOUR COCKINESS-- TO CHALLENGE THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL LIKE THAT...
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE MATURED A LITTLE...


HUH?
THE MASTER AIN'T COCKY!


...


ON TOP OF THAT, HE DEFEATED FIVE DISCIPLES... ALL BY HIMSELF!!
HE HAD YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ IN A DEADLOCK!!
YOU'RE AMAZING, MASTER!!


WHAT'S YOUR NAME, KID?
...


HUH?
WHO TOLD YOU I HAD DENSHICHIRŌ IN A DEAD-LOCK...?

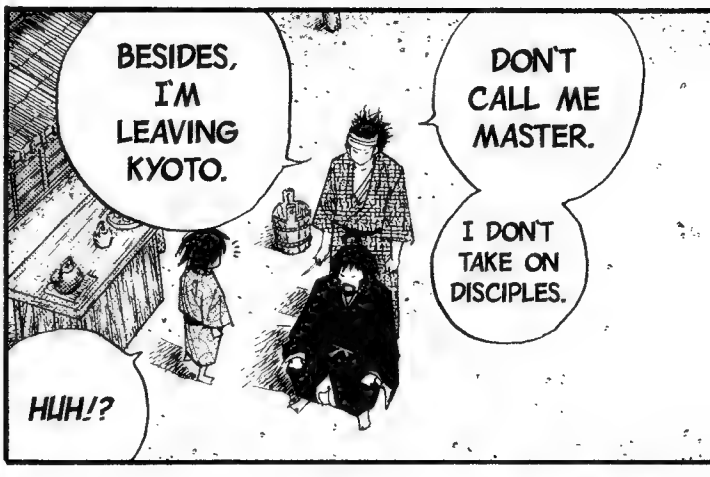

I THINK *HE'S* THE ONE THAT BURNED DOWN THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
A DRUNKARD. HE WAS ALL BEAT UP.
AND HE LOOKED REALLY WEIRD.
SAID HE SAW EVERY-THING.


JŌTARŌ!!
AND I--
I WANT TO BE A SAMURAI JUST LIKE YOU.

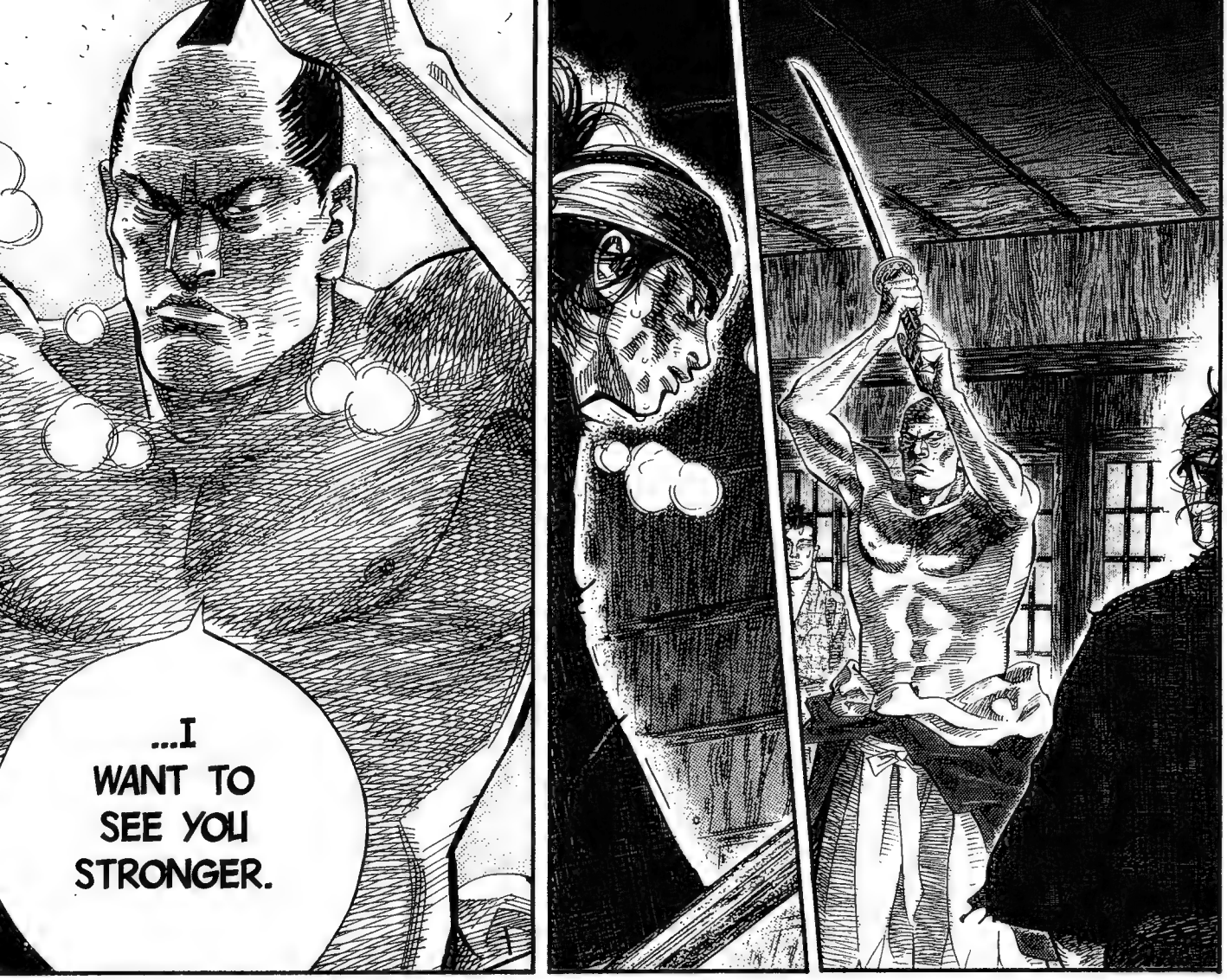

HE CARRIED YOU ALL THE WAY OVER HERE.


I'M GOING TO TAKE ONE YEAR TO TRAVEL ACROSS THE COUNTRY.
I'M GOING TO WORK ON IMPROVING MY SWORDSMANSHIP.


I HAD DENSHICHIRŌ IN A DEADLOCK...?


BESIDES, I'M LEAVING KYOTO.
DON'T CALL ME MASTER.
I DON'T TAKE ON DISCIPLES.
HUH!?


THANKS FOR TAKING CARE OF ME, JŌTARŌ.


...I WANT TO SEE YOU STRONGER.


...


DAMN MONK...
TAKUAN.


I AM GOING TO BECOME STRONGER.


THE WORLD IS FULL OF STRONG MEN.


DOES THAT INTIMIDATE YOU?
HMPH.
...


...




NO...
IT INVIGORATES ME.

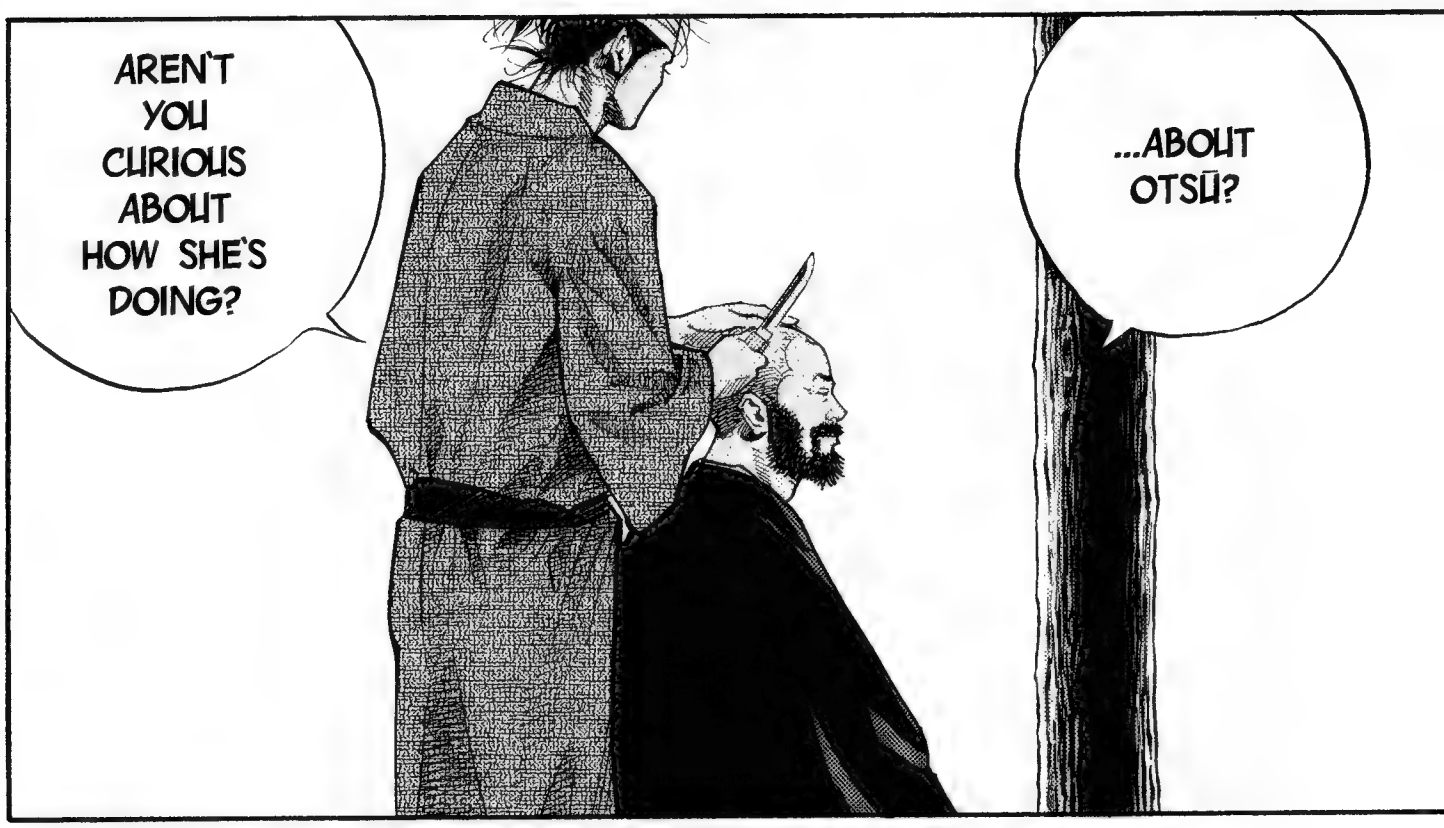

FIRST...
I'M HEADING FOR NARA.




I TOLD YOU, NO DISCIPLES.
I'M GOING WITH YOU!!
THAT'S WHY I'M TELLING YOU...
TAKING YOU ALONG WILL ONLY COMPLICATE THINGS.
URGH!
Fup
Fup
Fup
Fup
HEY!
HEY! LET GO!!
BUT THERE ARE SO MANY STRONG SAMURAI IN NARA...LIKE YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI AND HŌZŌIN IN'EI.
HMM...
THAT'S WHY I'M GOING THERE.
NOT TO MENTION ALL THE DANGEROUS STRAGGLERS AND RŌNIN ROAMING AROUND...
ALL THE SAMURAI IN KYOTO ARE SO PRETENTIOUS !!
FIND ANOTHER SAMURAI TO TRAIN UNDER!!
I WON'T BE YOUR MASTER.
I WANT TO BE WITH YOU, MASTER MIYAMOTO!!
YOU'RE STRONG AND UNREFINED.
I'M NOT TAKING A PLEASURE TRIP...
I KNOW. I WANT TO BE A SAMURAI, TOO.
MASTER!!
Fup
Fup
PLEASE TAKE ME WITH YOU...


...
UN-REFINED HE SAYS!
HEE HEE HEE
...
HMPH!
UN-REFINED ?
HEY...
NNGH!
WHUD
HEY...
YOU ALL RIGHT?
...
SAMURAI DON'T CRY.
...
SNIFF
SNIFF
...
I WANT TO BE A SAMURAI!!
I...


HUH?
SWICH
DON'T YOU WANT TO ASK ME...?
MUSASHI...

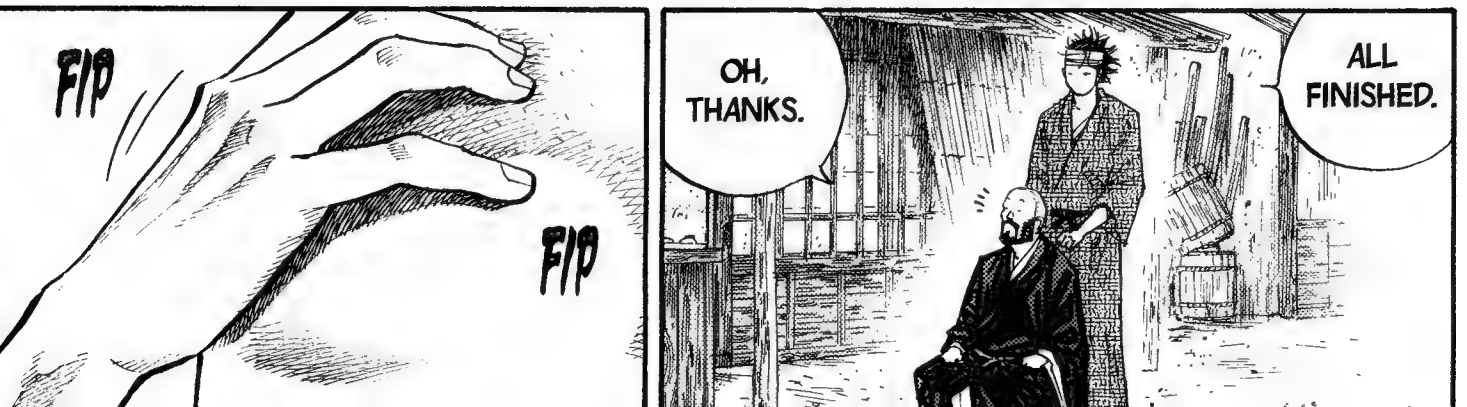

AREN'T YOU CURIOUS ABOUT HOW SHE'S DOING?
...ABOUT OTSŪ?

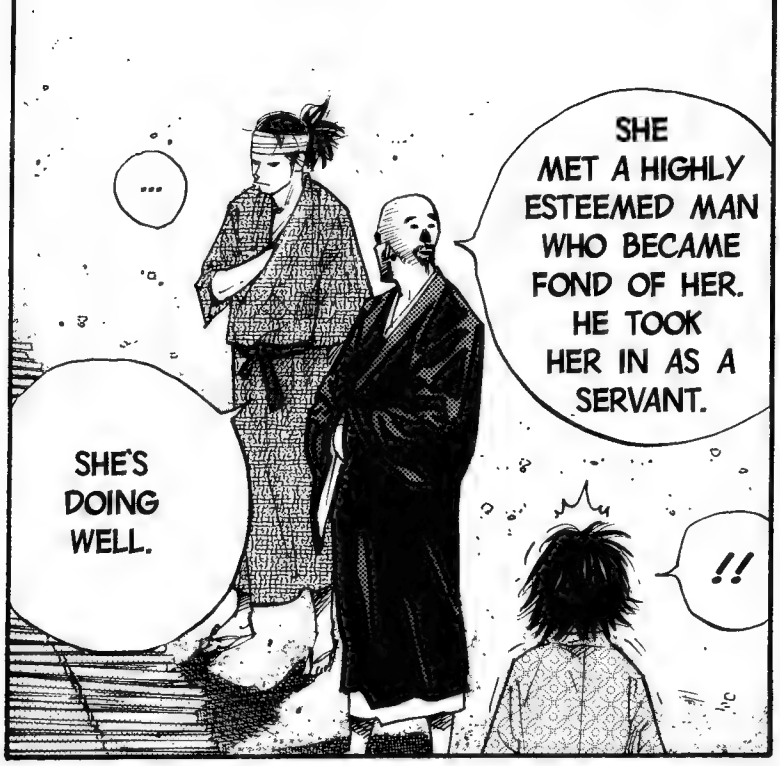

HAH! COME ON!!
N-NOT REALLY...
...!!


THAT'S WHAT YOU WERE CRYING OUT IN YOUR SLEEP!!
HEE HEE HEE
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, JŌTARŌ?
OTSŪ!
OTSŪ!
OTSŪ!


SNIF
UH-HUH.

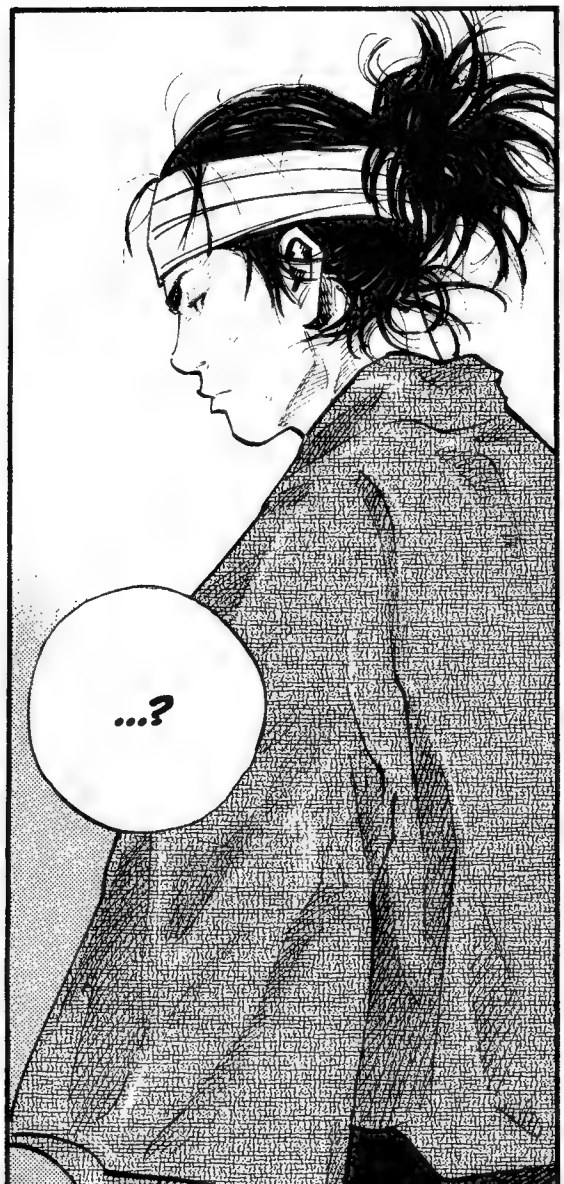

HMPH.


FIP
FIP
OH, THANKS.
ALL FINISHED.

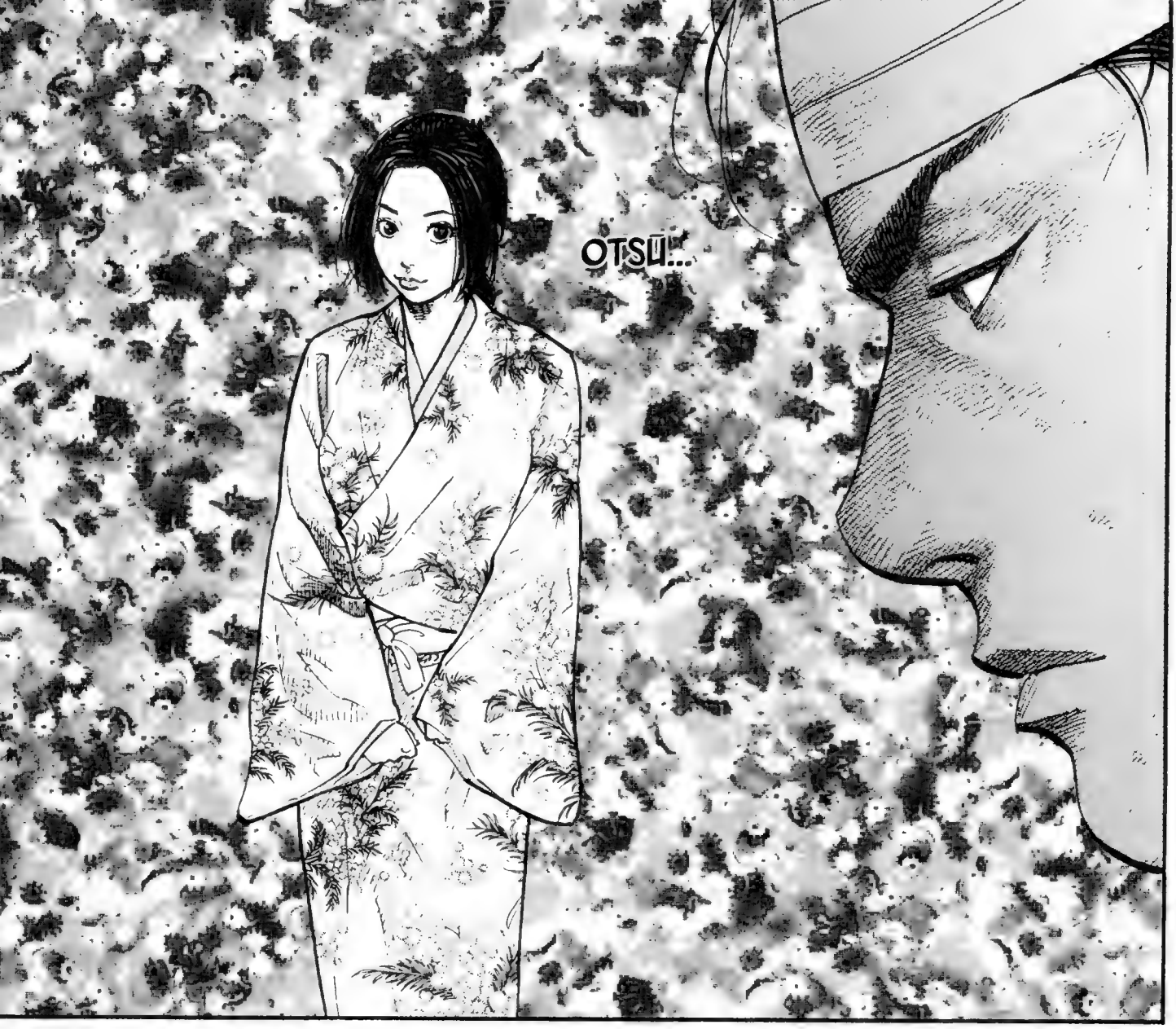

...
SHE MET A HIGHLY ESTEEMED MAN WHO BECAME FOND OF HER. HE TOOK HER IN AS A SERVANT.
SHE'S DOING WELL.
!!


DON'T WORRY.
OTSŪ IS FINE.


...
HMMM...
HUH?
HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE

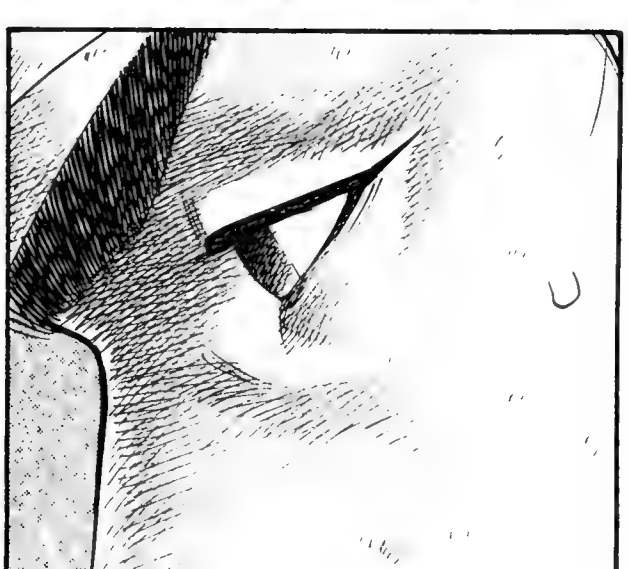

...?


I'M SURE YOU'LL EVENTUALLY RUN INTO HER AGAIN...
ALONG YOUR PURSUIT OF THE WAY OF THE SWORD....


OTSŪ...


TUGG


OH,
AND ONE
MORE
THING...




SHE'S STILL AFTER ME...?
GRANNY HON'IDEN...
SHE'S AFTER BOTH YOU AND OTSŪ...
HUH...?
UH-HUH...
SHE'S SO DEVOTED TO HER SON.
CHIRP CHIRP
HMPH.
HUH?
I THINK I'LL HAVE YOU SHAVE MY BEARD, TOO.
SWICH
SWICH
SURE.


(WANTED: HONIDEN MATAHACHI)
人相
本位田又八
MMBL
MMBL


SO THIS IS THE GUY THAT BURNED DOWN THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
WHAT A FOOL.
MRMR
MRMR
SERVES 'EM RIGHT. THOSE GUYS WERE ARROGANT BASTARDS.
HUH?
HEY, OLD WOMAN! QUIT SHOVING!


HEY!
RRRRIP


TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
WHY'S SHE SHAKING?
HUH?


WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!?


MATAHACHI...
NO!!
WHAT'S SHE CRYING FOR?
MMBL MMBL.


Vagabond


(AREN'T YOU DONE YET?)
まだか!?
(A BIT MORE...)
もう少し
(...AND I'LL BE DONE.)
完成




WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
HUF
HUF
HUF

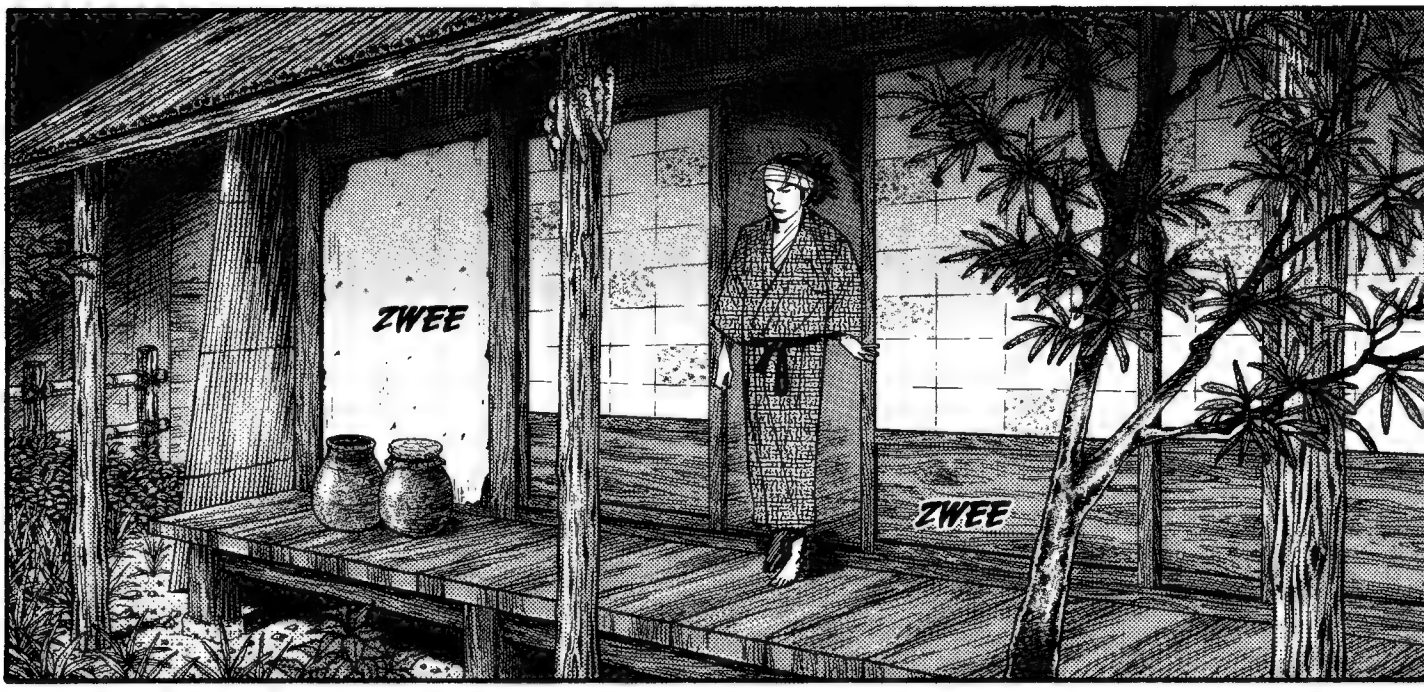

HUF
HUF
HUF



#33 Departures

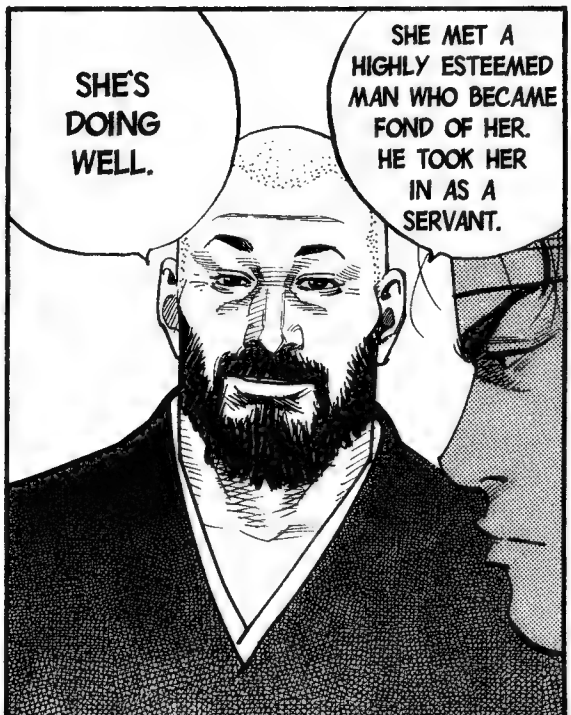



ZWEE


ZWEE
ZWEE

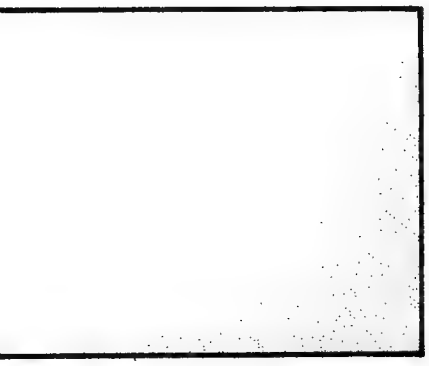

I KEEP DREAMING ABOUT OTSŪ...
MUST BE BECAUSE I JUST SAW TAKUAN...


WHAT KIND OF GUY IS SHE WORKING FOR?
...


SHE'S DOING WELL.
SHE MET A HIGHLY ESTEEMED MAN WHO BECAME FOND OF HER. HE TOOK HER IN AS A SERVANT.


OTSŪ...
...ARE YOU DOING OKAY?


WHAT AM I THINKING ?
I'M SUPPOSED TO HAVE CHOSEN THE WAY OF THE SWORD!!




ZWEE
ZWEE


I'M A DAMN FOOL!!


KLAK
KLAK


R R R R R R R R R
IT'S NO GOOD...
THERE'S NOTHING MORE WE CAN DO...!!


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF


HUF
HUF
HUF
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
DID *HE* DO THIS!?


MASTER ...!!
I'M SO SORRY.
DID MIYAMOTO MUSASHI DO THIS!?
RRRRRRR
HEDA!! HOW COULD YOU HAVE LET THIS HAPPEN!?
FSH


TEAR DOWN WHAT'S LEFT OF IT SO IT DOESN'T SPREAD TO THE NEIGHBORING BUILDINGS.
AT THIS RATE, THE FIRE WILL SPREAD.
DO IT NOW.

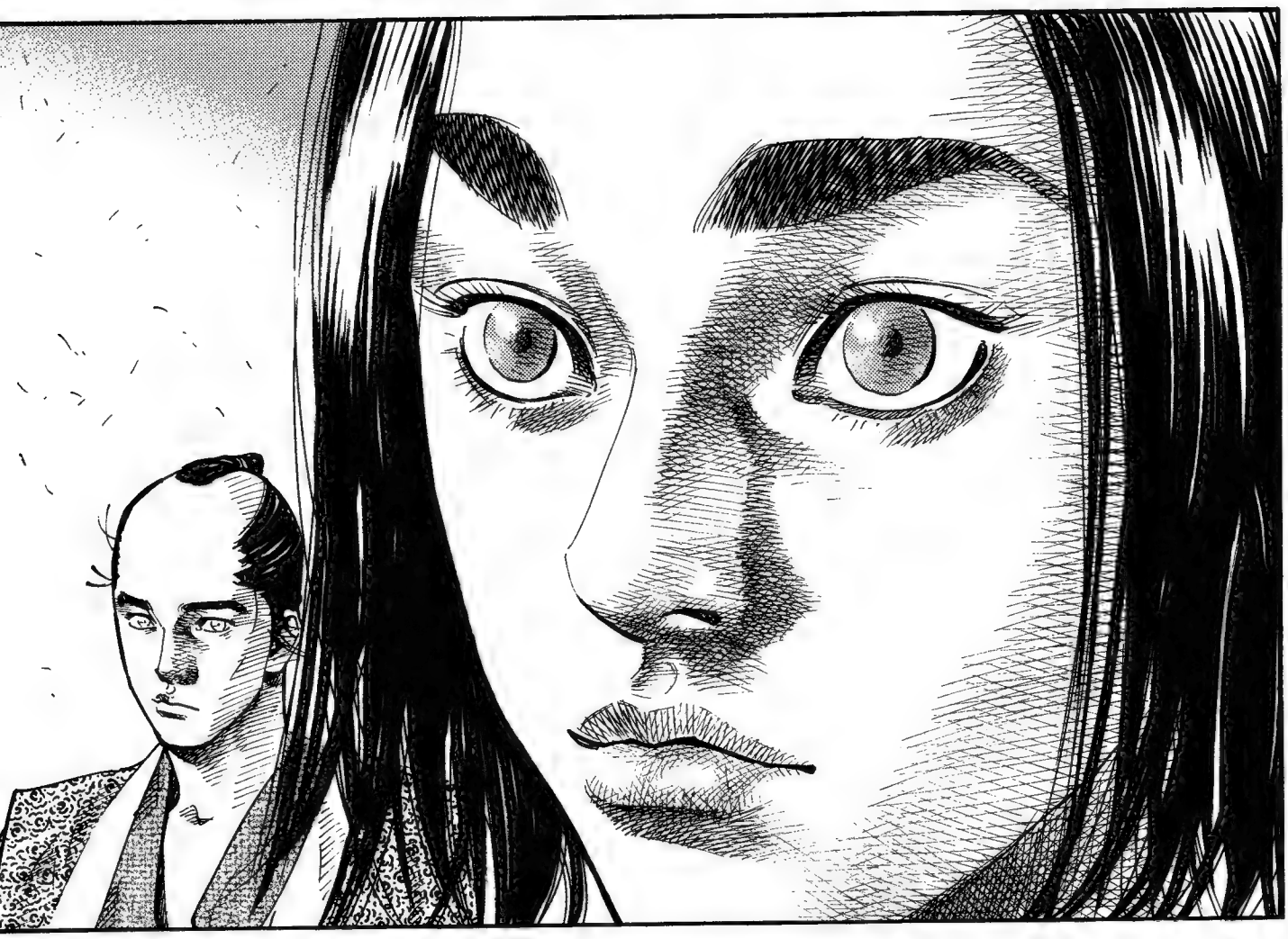

TEAR IT DOWN.
SIR?


TEAR IT DOWN!
HURRY!!
Y-YES... SIR!!


KRAK
THUP


KRAK
THWAK
THUP

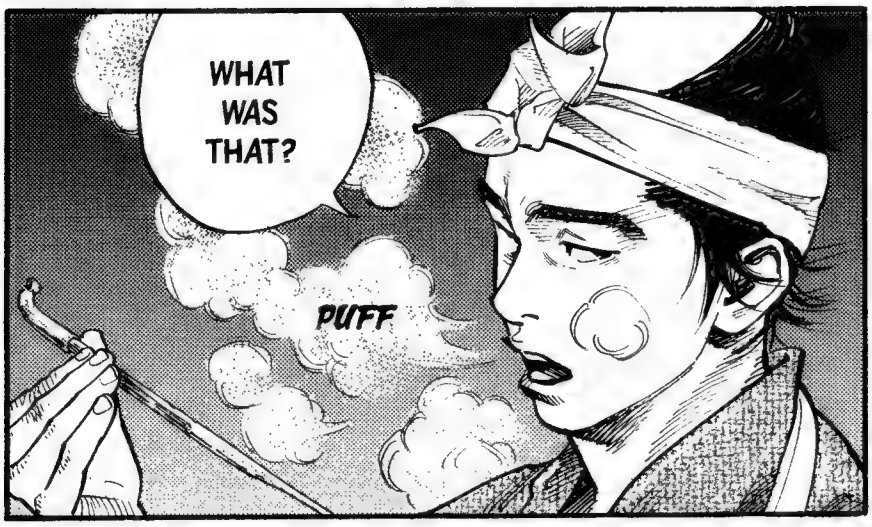






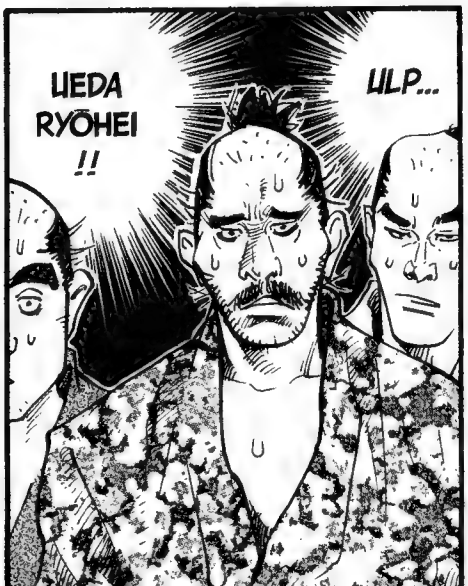

KLAKK
KLAKK
I GUESS THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL COULDN'T LAST LONG WITHOUT ITS FOUNDER, KEMPŌ.
I GUESS SO.


THEY GOT WHAT THEY DESERVED...
UH-OH!!
I MEAN, HE'S JUST A PLAYBOY...
WITH SEIJŪRŌ AS THE SUCCESSOR...

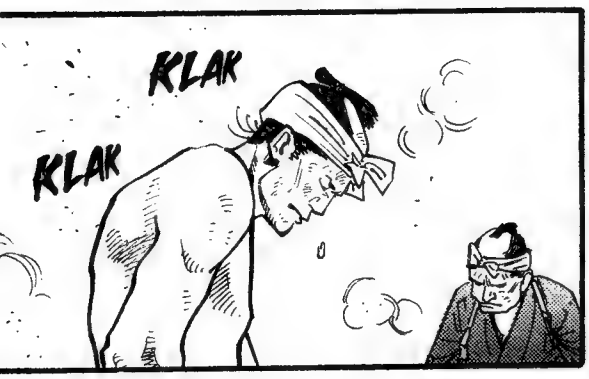

WHAT WAS THAT?
PUFF


...


TP
TP
TP
TP


UEDA RYŌHEI !!
ULP...


ALL THE MEMORIES OF HIS FATHER HAVE BEEN BURNED TO THE GROUND.
HOW COULD HE NOT BE AFFECTED?
KLAKK


KLAK
KLAK

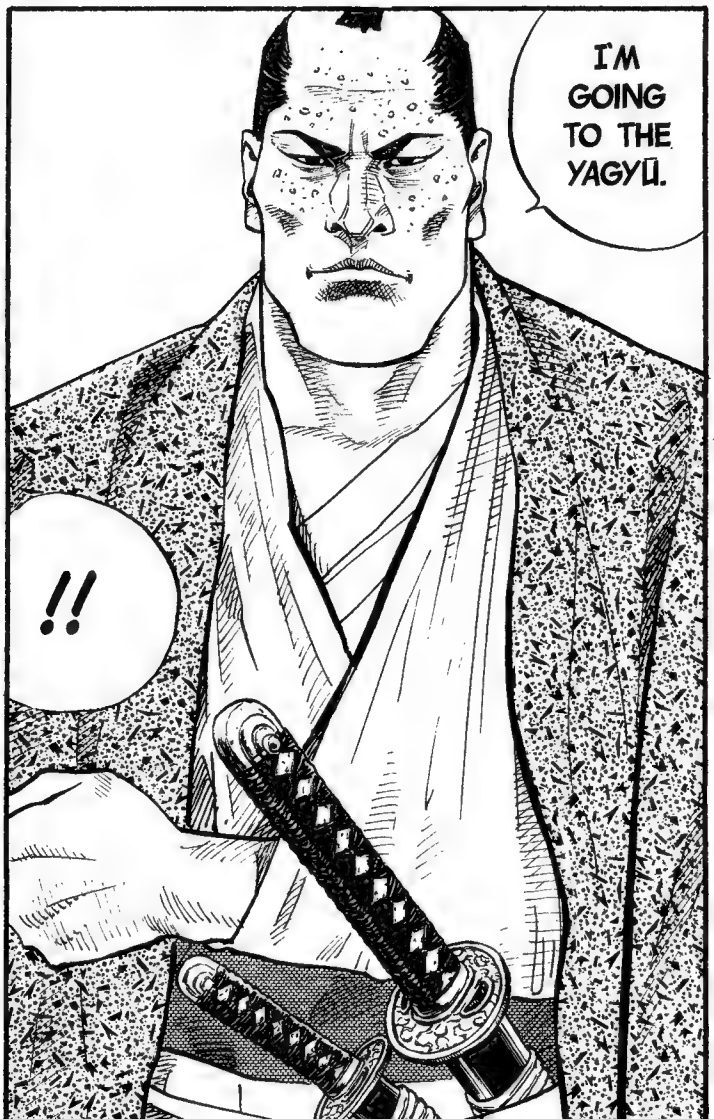

DON'T CRY.
DO YOU KNOW WHY WE ENCOUNTER HARDSHIP?


KLUNK
KLAK
URGH...
IT'S SO AWFUL I WANT TO CRY.


SMIRK
SO THAT WE CAN BECOME STRONGER.


THIS IS GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A MASTER SWORDSMAN.
HMPH.
I'M ONLY GOING TO GET BETTER.


WITHOUT FATHER... THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON I CAN LEARN FROM...


I'M GOING TO THE YAGYŪ.
!!


SENSEI!
DENSHI-CHIRŌ.


YOU'RE NOT IN ANY SHAPE TO GO ANY-WHERE.


YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI...


UEDA...
LOOK AFTER THINGS HERE.


YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI...


I'M MOVING ON.

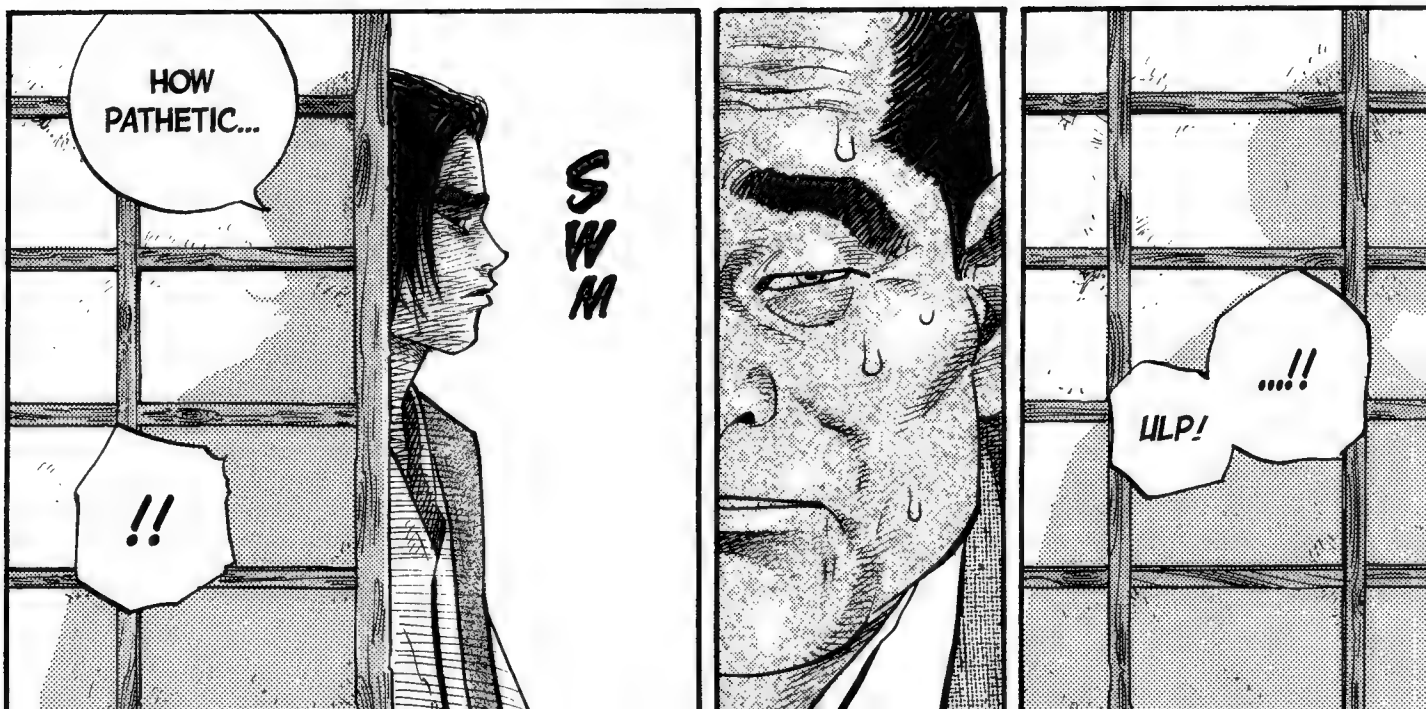

FATHER...
IF MIYAMOTO MUSASHI EVER COMES BACK HERE, GIVE HIM THIS.
IT'S THE DATE OF OUR NEXT MATCH.
I'M HEADING OUT...
KRICH
KRICH

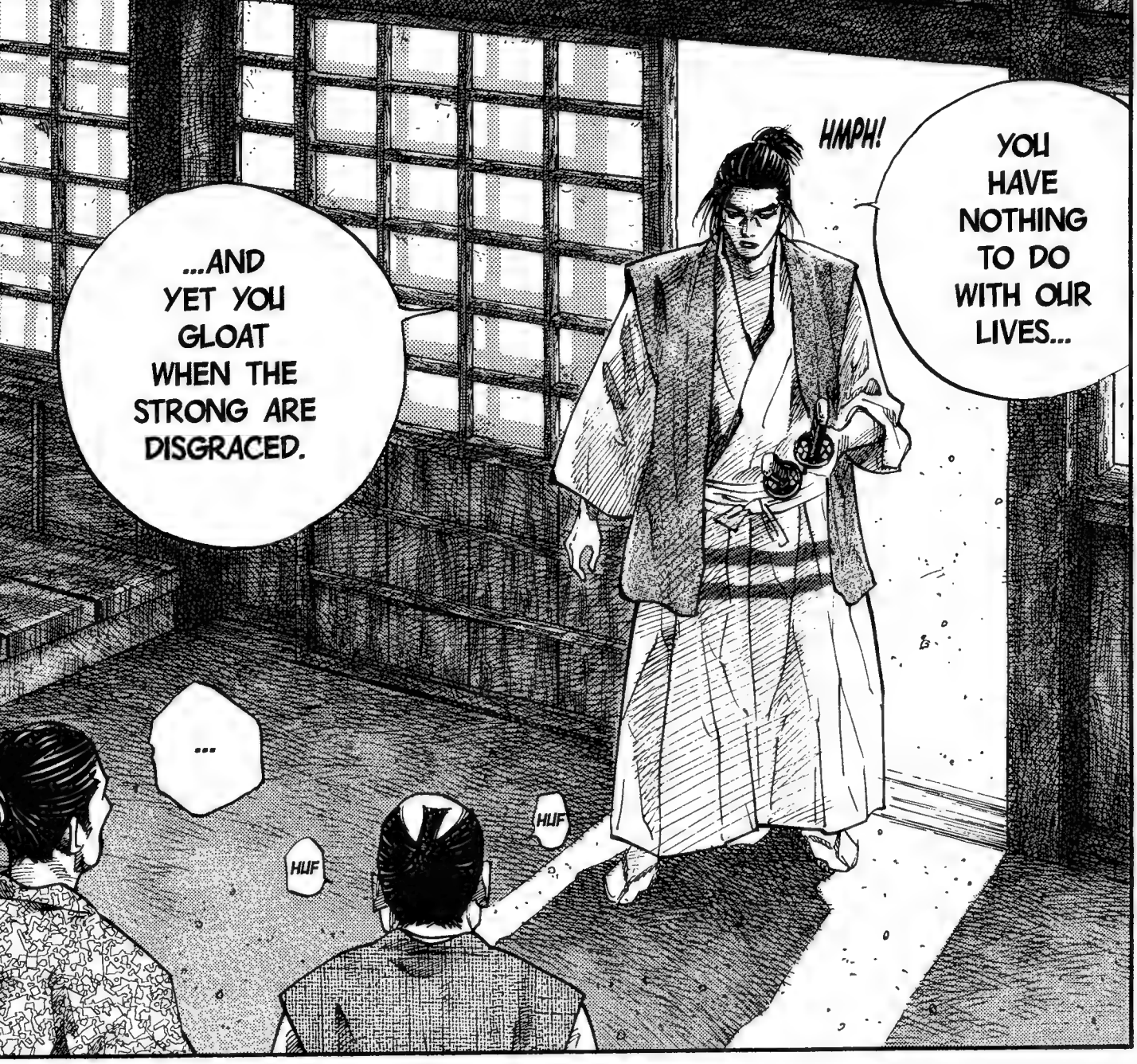

YES... MIYAMOTO *WAS* STAYING HERE...
...BUT HE LEFT A WHILE AGO.
S-SOMETHING ABOUT GOING TO NARA...
BUT I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE...
DID HE SAY WHERE HE WAS HEADING?
GULP
NARA...

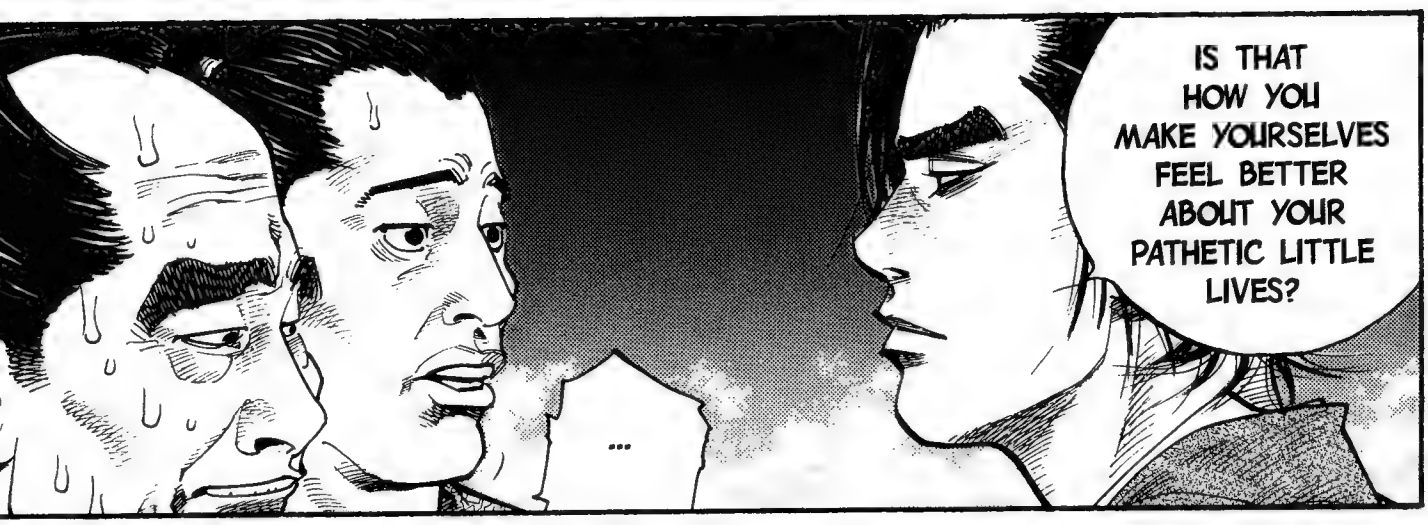

PHEW...
THAT WAS SCARY...


I'LL SAY.
THE YOSHIOKA FOLKS ARE DESPERATE.
SOME NO-NAME RŌNIN STIRS THE PLACE UP...
...AND THEN THE WHOLE SCHOOL BURNS DOWN!


THEY'VE NEVER KNOWN SUCH SHAME!
HA HA!
THE SCHOOL'S NEVER BEEN IN SUCH DISGRACE!!
HEE HEE


HOW PATHETIC...
!!
SWM
...!!
ULP!


...AND YET YOU GLOAT WHEN THE STRONG ARE DISGRACED.
...
HUF
HUF
HMPH!
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH OUR LIVES...


...
IS THAT HOW YOU MAKE YOURSELVES FEEL BETTER ABOUT YOUR PATHETIC LITTLE LIVES?


WHO DO YOU THINK OWNS YOUR LIFE ANYWAY?




TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH


CHAK


YOU'RE SO PITIFUL...
NOT EVEN WORTH CUTTING DOWN.
PLISH
PLISH
HMPH!
...!!
FWISH
?


AIEEE!
GION TŌJI.
FROM NOW ON, I'M AN ASSASSIN FOR THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
KRICH
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, I WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE ME.


Vagabond

(ZWEE ZWEE)

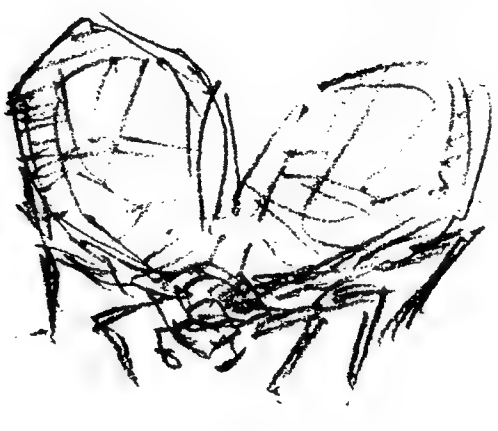
リリリ

よくよく見ると
不気味.

(IT'S PRETTY DISGUSTING
IF YOU LOOK UP CLOSE.)

(ZWEE ZWEE)

リリリ



スズムシ

(SUZUMUSHI – BELL-RING CRICKET)


HE'S JUST LIKE ME...
...AND IF I STOP BY EVERY WELL-KNOWN SCHOOL ALONG THE WAY, I'LL EVENTUALLY FIND HIM.
...THE WAY OF THE SWORD IS THE ONLY THING HE THINKS ABOUT.
KRICH
HMPH
AND THIS MEANS...
...I'LL HAVE PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK ON MY OWN SWORDSMANSHIP.
KRICH
I'LL HEAD FOR NARA...
THIS MAY TURN OUT TO BE FUN AFTER ALL...
KRICH
HA HA!
KRICH
KRICH



#34 Departures II




STOP FOLLOWING ME.


YOU GUYS JUST HAPPEN TO BE WALKING IN FRONT OF ME!!
I AIN'T FOLLOWING YOU.

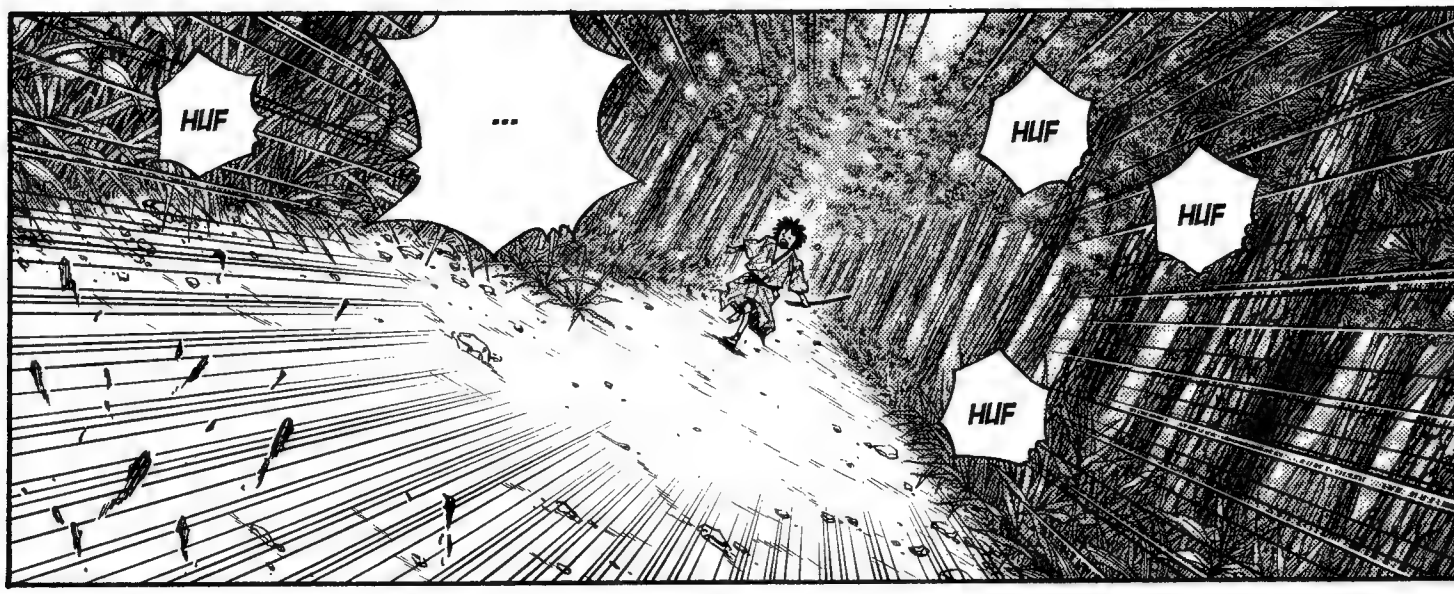

...


FWISH
HEY!!


I SEE...
...


WAIT FOR ME!!
STOP!!
TMP


ARGH...

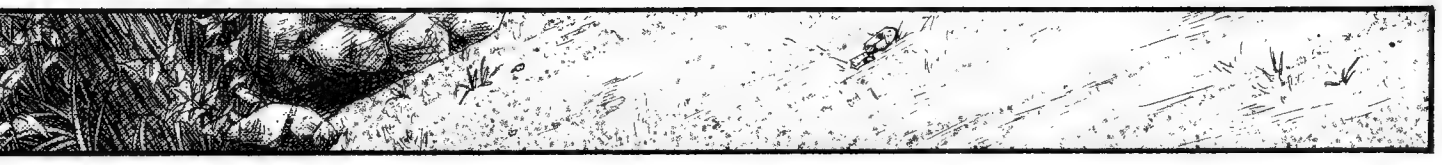

HUF
...
HUF
HUF
HUF


HUF
...
HUF
HUF
HUF


STOP!!
MASTER!!


WAIT FOR ME!!
MASTER!!


MASTER ...




YEAH.
YOU SURE YOU WANT TO LEAVE HIM?


HE'S BETTER OFF WITHOUT ME.
I HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE OF MY OWN.


...


...
WELL...
...MAYBE YOU'RE *STILL* NOT READY FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...
THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED AN ASPECT OF TRAINING IN ITSELF...
YOU KNOW...
THE RESPONSI-BILITY OF WATCHING OVER A KID...


HMM...
COME TO THINK OF IT, THIS REMINDS ME OF WHAT YOU SAID TO...

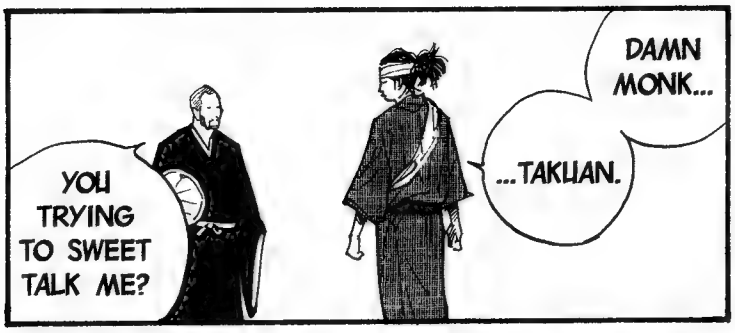



I'M GOING WITH YOU.
TAKEZŌ...
I ALREADY TOLD GRANNY HON'IDEN THAT I WASN'T GOING TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH HER FAMILY.
I CAN'T STAY IN MIYAMOTO VILLAGE ANYMORE.
HUH!?
FWIP
GASP!
YOU'LL GET IN THE WAY OF MY TRAINING.

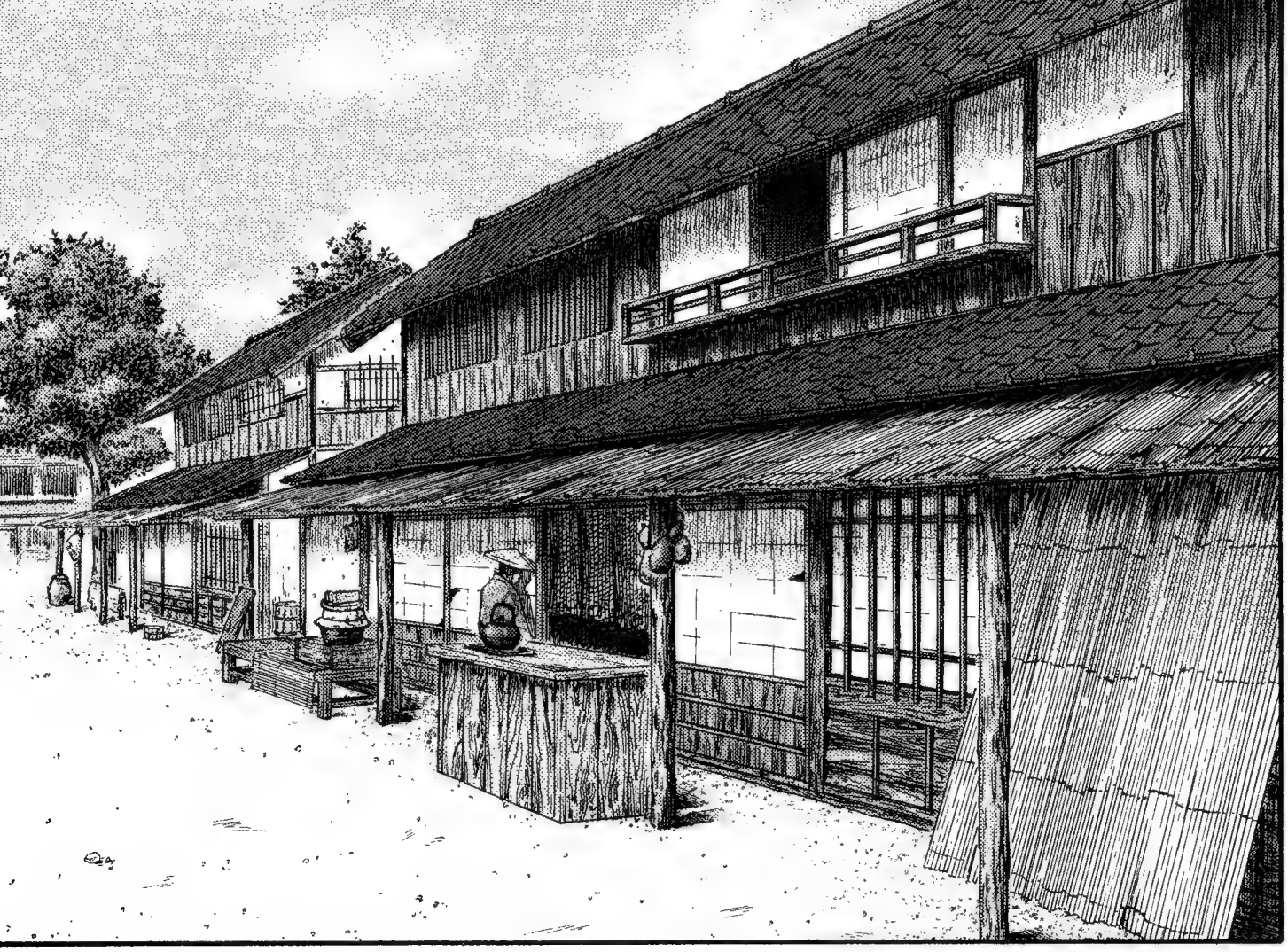

I HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE DEALING WITH MYSELF...
HMPH!
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF SOMEONE TRAINING WITH A WOMAN BY HIS SIDE.


...

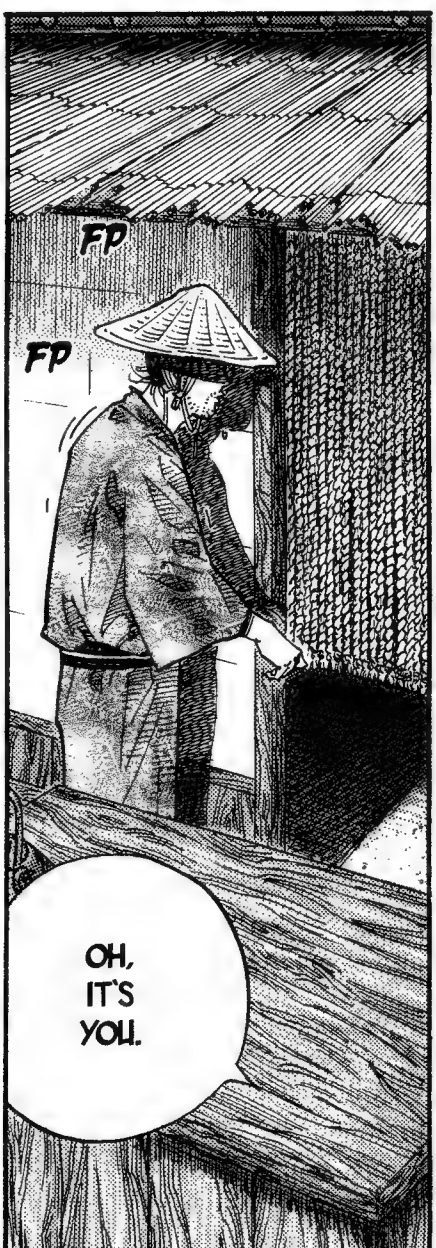

YOU WERE TRYING TO ACT SO TOUGH...
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID...
...


DAMN MONK...
...TAKUAN.
YOU TRYING TO SWEET TALK ME?


HM?
TAKUAN, I NEED YOUR ADVICE...

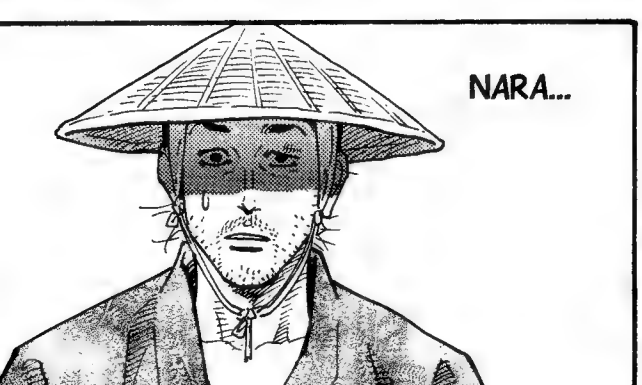



HELLO.
!!
URK!


FP
FP
OH, IT'S YOU.


HE'S A TOUGH FELLA, I MEAN WITH INJURIES LIKE THAT...
HE SAID HE WAS HEADING FOR NARA.


I WAS WONDERING ABOUT THE INJURED FELLOW I BROUGHT HERE...
OH, HIM.

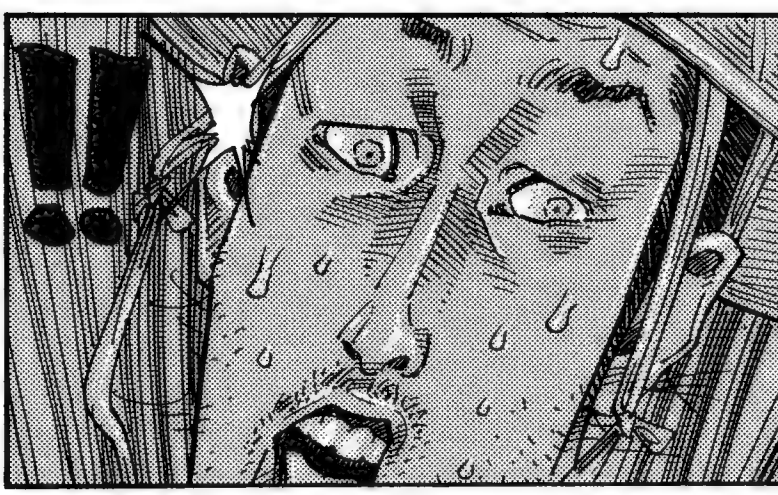

NARA...

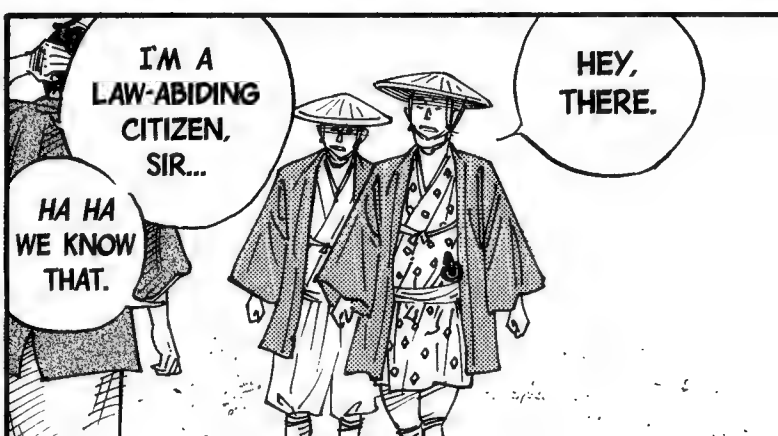

WE GREW UP TOGETHER...!!
THERE'S NO REASON I CAN'T DO WHAT HE'S DONE.
HE'S GONNA BE SOMEBODY SOME DAY.
I CAN DO IT, TOO. I CAN...


AMAZING, REALLY.
AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN.


HERE'S A FLYER OF THE GUY WHO BURNED DOWN THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
IT'S A GOOD LIKENESS.
...
PUT IT UP WHERE YOUR GUESTS CAN SEE IT.
YES, SIR.


HM? HERE COMES AN OFFICIAL.




I'M A LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN, SIR...
HEY, THERE.
HA HA WE KNOW THAT.


HE MUST'VE HAD SOME GRUDGE AGAINST YOSHIOKA.
SAYS HE MIGHT BE BURNED AT THE STAKE.
WELL THEN, MAKE SURE YOU PUT IT UP.
YES...
YES, SIR.
MUST'VE BEEN OUTTA HIS MIND.
BURNING DOWN THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
!!
GASP!
(HONIDEN MATAHACHI)
HEY!!
...!!
...

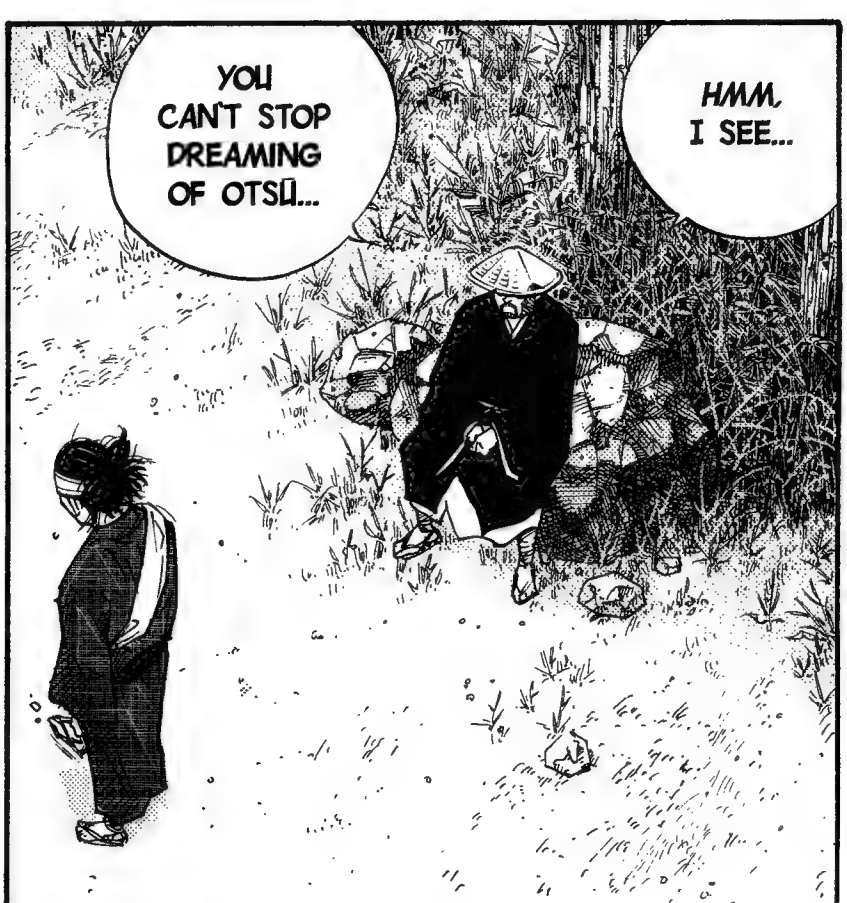

HUF
HUF
HUF
DAMN!!
DAMN!!
C-CRIMINAL!?
IF I HIDE A CRIMINAL, I'LL BE ARRESTED, TOO!!
HUF
HUF
I THOUGHT YOU'D LEFT US!!
WHY'D YOU COME BACK!?
WHAT ?
YOU HAVE TO BE KIDDING!!


GASP!
!!
TAKEZŌ ?
DO YOU REMEMBER TAKEZŌ?
YOU TOOK US BOTH IN...WHEN WE WERE SEVENTEEN...
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, THE GUY WHO'S BEEN THE TALK OF THE TOWN...
THE ONE THAT TOOK ON THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
THAT'S TAKEZŌ...
H-HE'S... ALIVE...?
WHAT...!?

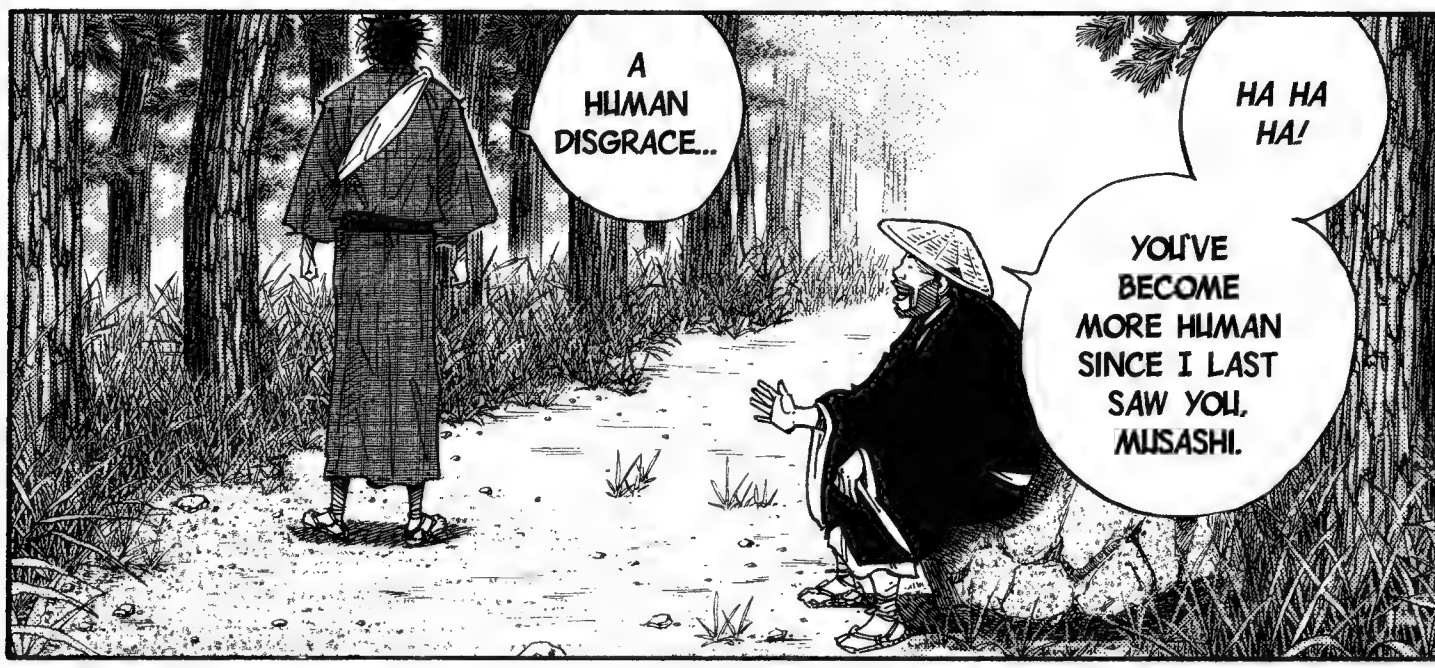

...!!
ZHOOP
IS IT TRUE!?


...


...
SO SHAMEFUL...


YOU CAN'T STOP DREAMING OF OTSŪ...
HMM, I SEE...


I THINK ABOUT HER...
...ALL THE TIME.
SO YOU THINK ABOUT HER A LOT?
...


A HUMAN DISGRACE...
HA HA HA!
YOU'VE BECOME MORE HUMAN SINCE I LAST SAW YOU, MUSASHI.


I MISS HER.


NOT ONLY DO I THINK ABOUT HER...


I'M SUCH A FOOL!
WHY AM I ASKING HIM ABOUT THIS...!?
HOW DO YOU SHAKE IT OFF...?
MONKS AREN'T DISTRACTED LIKE THIS ...


WHAT!?

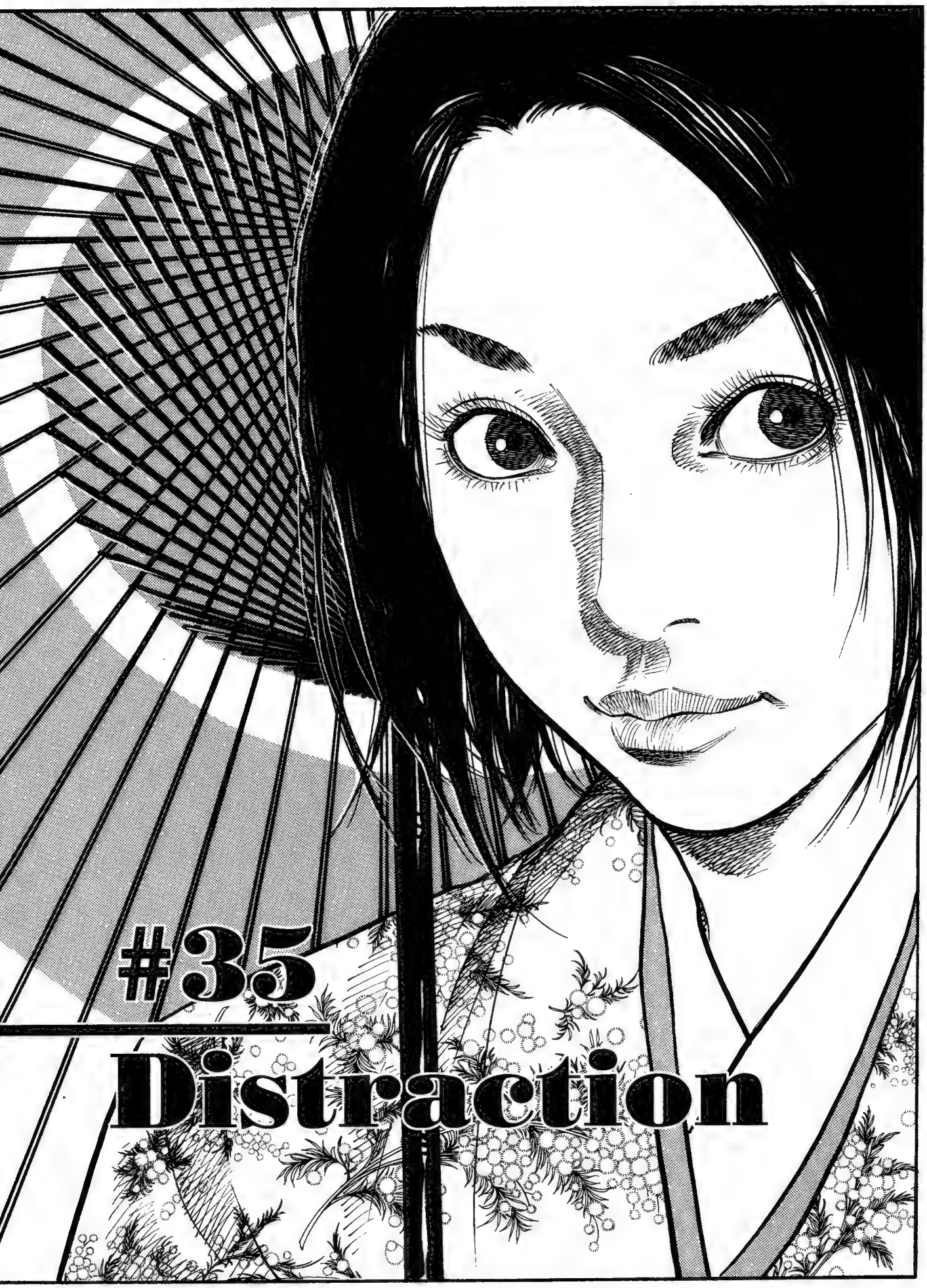

WITH THE STATE YOU'RE IN, EVEN I COULD CUT YOU DOWN.
I SEE...
!!






FWICH


HMM...
FP
HERE.
FWIP
...YOU'LL DIE BEFORE YOU EVER SEE OTSŪ AGAIN.
IF SOMEONE LIKE ME CAN CUT YOU DOWN...



#35 Distraction


C'MON, MUSASHI!
WHAT DO YOU SAY? LET'S HAVE A LITTLE MATCH.


...
CUT IT OUT.

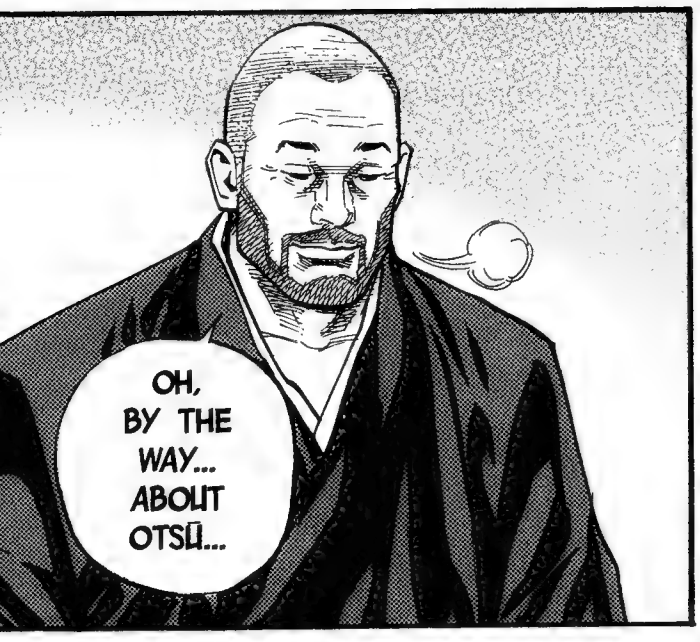

C'MON ...
LET'S GO.
THINK YOU CAN TAKE ME?


...


WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?


I'M NOT SEVENTEEN ANYMORE.
OH?

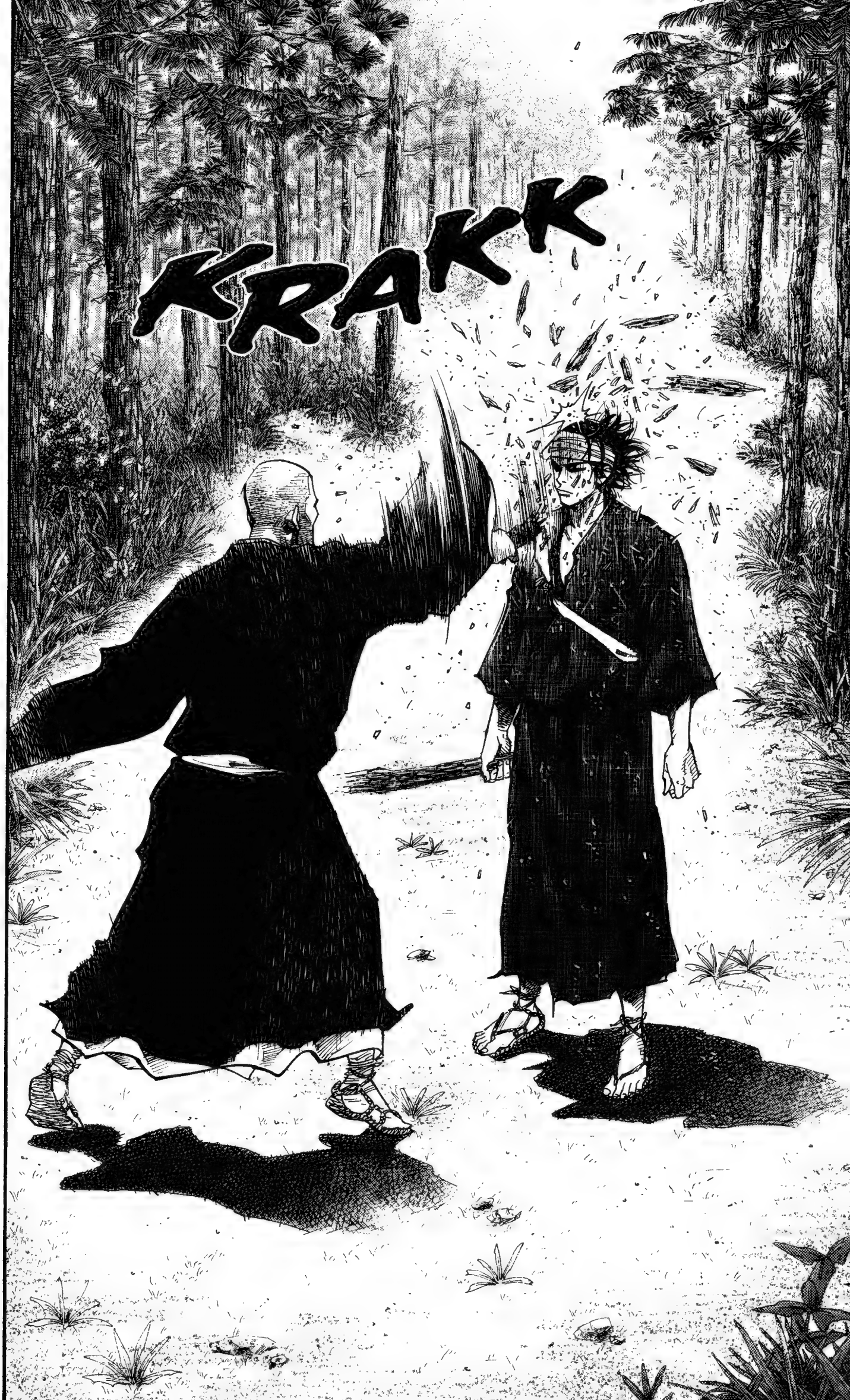

I COULD KILL YOU WITH THIS STICK...


OH, BY THE WAY... ABOUT OTSŪ...




...


SMIRK


KRAKK




HA HA HA HA HA!!
IF THIS WERE A REAL MATCH, YOU'D BE DEAD, HUH?


NO! IT WAS FAIR.
IN ORDER TO WIN, IN ORDER TO SURVIVE...
IT WAS A VALID MOVE.


THAT WAS--
KRICH


HUH?


I'M SO WEAK!!
AND I FELL FOR IT...!!

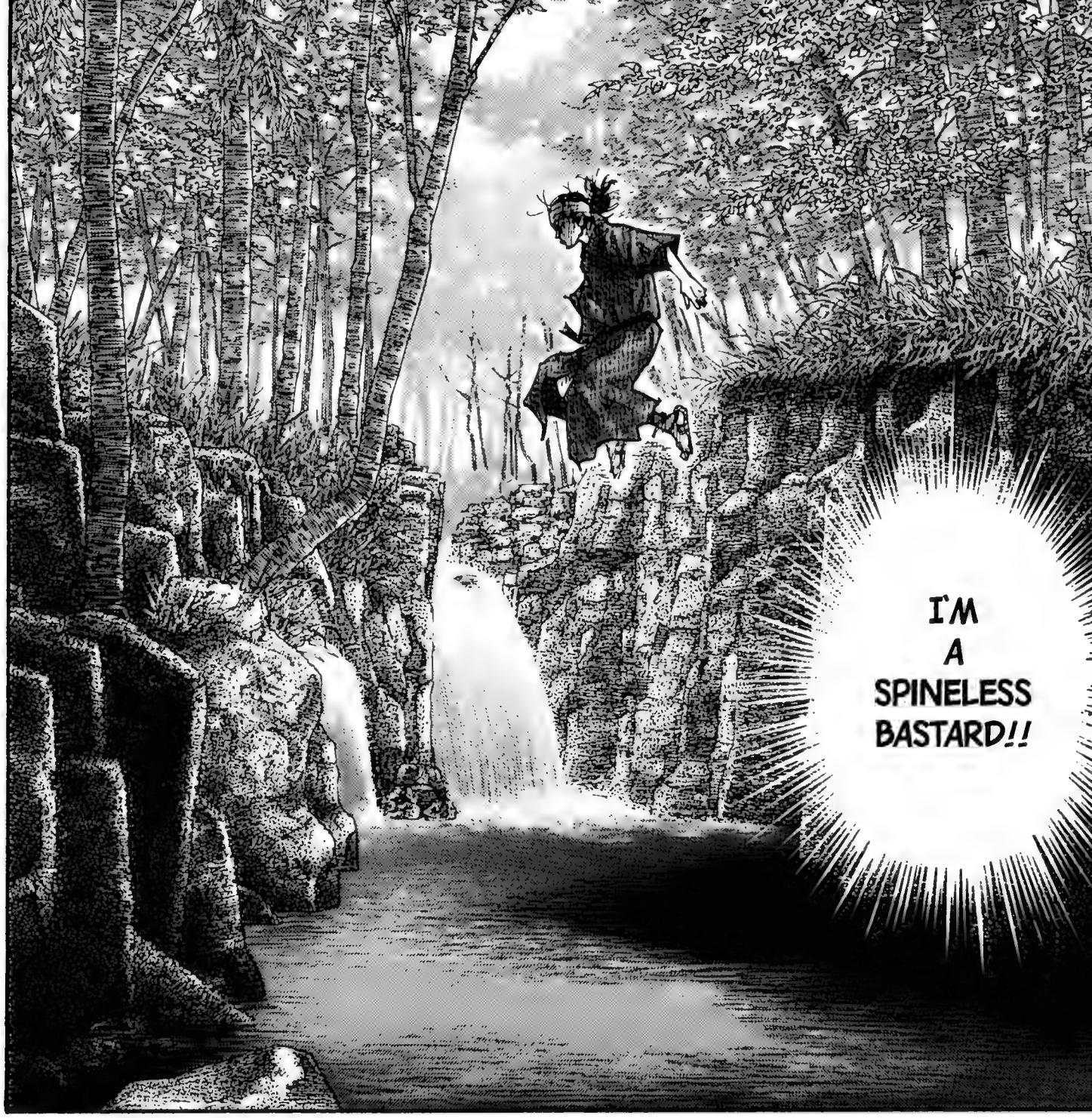

GOOD THING IT WAS A ROTTEN STICK...
GOOD THING I WAS YOUR OPPONENT.
HA HA HA


...
KRAK


TUMP
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME!?
TUMP
TMP
HUH?
HEY, MUSASHI, WAIT...


TUMP
JUST BECAUSE I KILLED A BUNCH OF SCRUBS AT THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
TUMP
A MERE FOUR YEARS OF TRAINING...


KRAK
KRICH
PRE-OCCUPIED WITH OTSŪ...
KRICH
WHAT AM I DOING!?
JUST BECAUSE I SURVIVED A FIGHT WITH DENSHICHIRŌ, I'VE BECOME ARROGANT!!
I'M SUCH A FOOL!!

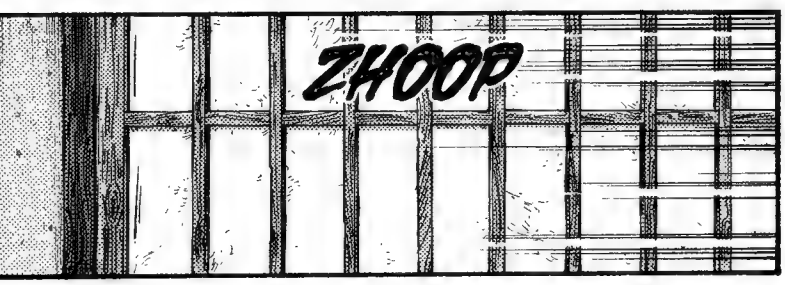

I'M A SPINELESS BASTARD!!


YOU FOOL! THAT WATER'S FREEZING COLD.
HA HA HA


GLUGLUG


SPLISSH


GET OUT OF HERE!!
YOU SPINELESS BASTARD!!


ZHOOP


WHAP
ARGH!

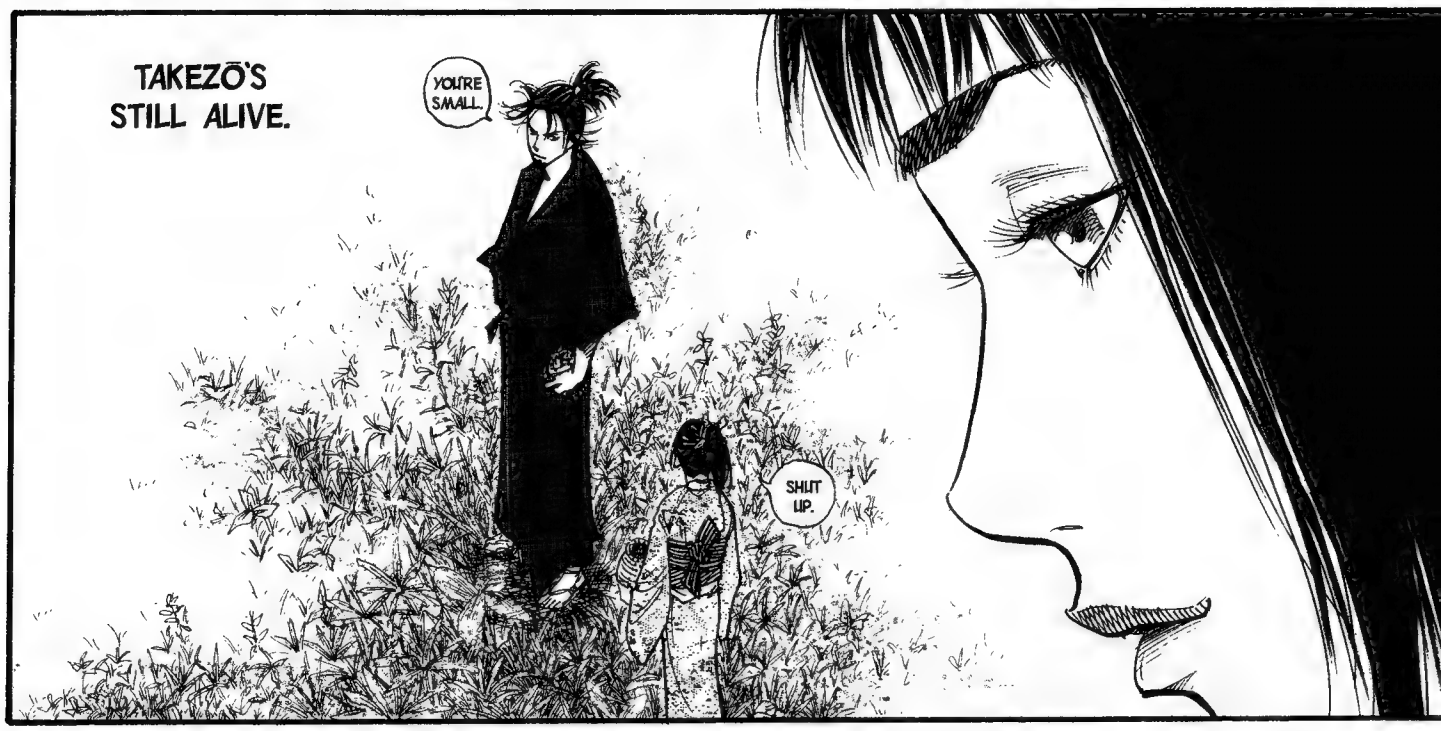

...
TP
TP


OKŌ! LET ME IN!
HOW DARE YOU!?


DON'T YOU *EVER* COME BACK!!
THEY'RE MY PRECIOUS CUSTOMERS!
KEEPING YOU HERE WOULD MAKE *ME* AN ENEMY OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL!!


TAKEZŌ...

AKEMI, DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR HIM...
...ALL THIS TIME...


TAKEZŌ'S STILL ALIVE.
YOU'RE SMALL.
SHUT UP.


LIKE A STRAY DOG!
I'VE BEEN THROWN OUT...


FOR US TO LEAVE KYOTO...
THE TIME HAS COME...


EVER SINCE SEKIGAHARA, THOSE TWO HAVE BEEN NOTHING BUT BAD LUCK.

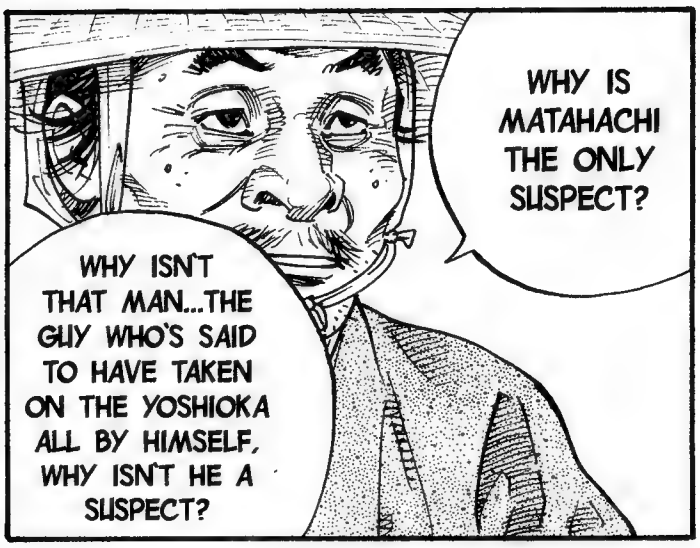

AND I CAN'T BEAR TO FACE TAKEZŌ. NOT LIKE THIS...
WHY DIDN'T I JUST GO BACK TO HER?
WHY DID I EVER LEAVE OTSŪ?
WHERE SHOULD I GO NOW?
ARE YOU ALL DOING WELL IN MIYAMOTO VILLAGE...?
OTSŪ... MOTHER... UNCLE GON...
I WANT TO GO BACK TO MIYAMOTO VILLAGE...!!

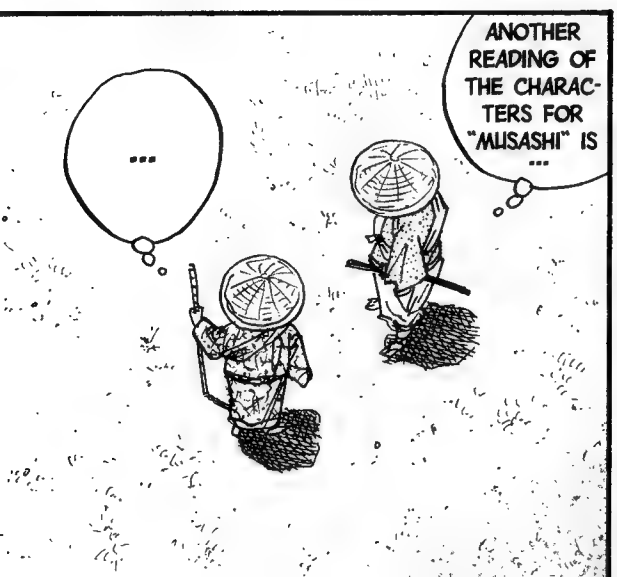

AN UNPARDONABLE OFFENSE AGAINST OUR ANCESTORS...!!
WE HAVE A CRIMINAL IN THE HON'IDEN FAMILY!!
WAIT A MINUTE, GRANNY!!
THE ONLY THING LEFT FOR ME TO DO IS...
CHAK
THIS COULD BE A MISTAKE!!
AHHH! LET GO!
WELL, I DON'T KNOW, BUT...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, UNCLE GON?
A MISTAKE!?
!!
(WANTED: HON'IDEN MATAHACHI)
HEY...
MMBL
HOLD ON, GRANNY!!
MMBL
MMBL
IT'S FINALLY HAPPENED...
D-DON'T TAKE IT THE WRONG WAY...
...
I MEAN, HE'D HAVE TO BE PRETTY GUTSY TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
DO YOU THINK THAT MATAHACHI WOULD EVEN TRY TO BURN DOWN THAT FAMOUS YOSHIOKA SCHOOL?


NO, YOU'RE RIGHT.
HE WOULDN'T DO IT. I SHOULD KNOW. I'M HIS MOTHER.


THAT MAN CALLED "MIYAMOTO MUSASHI."
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...


...

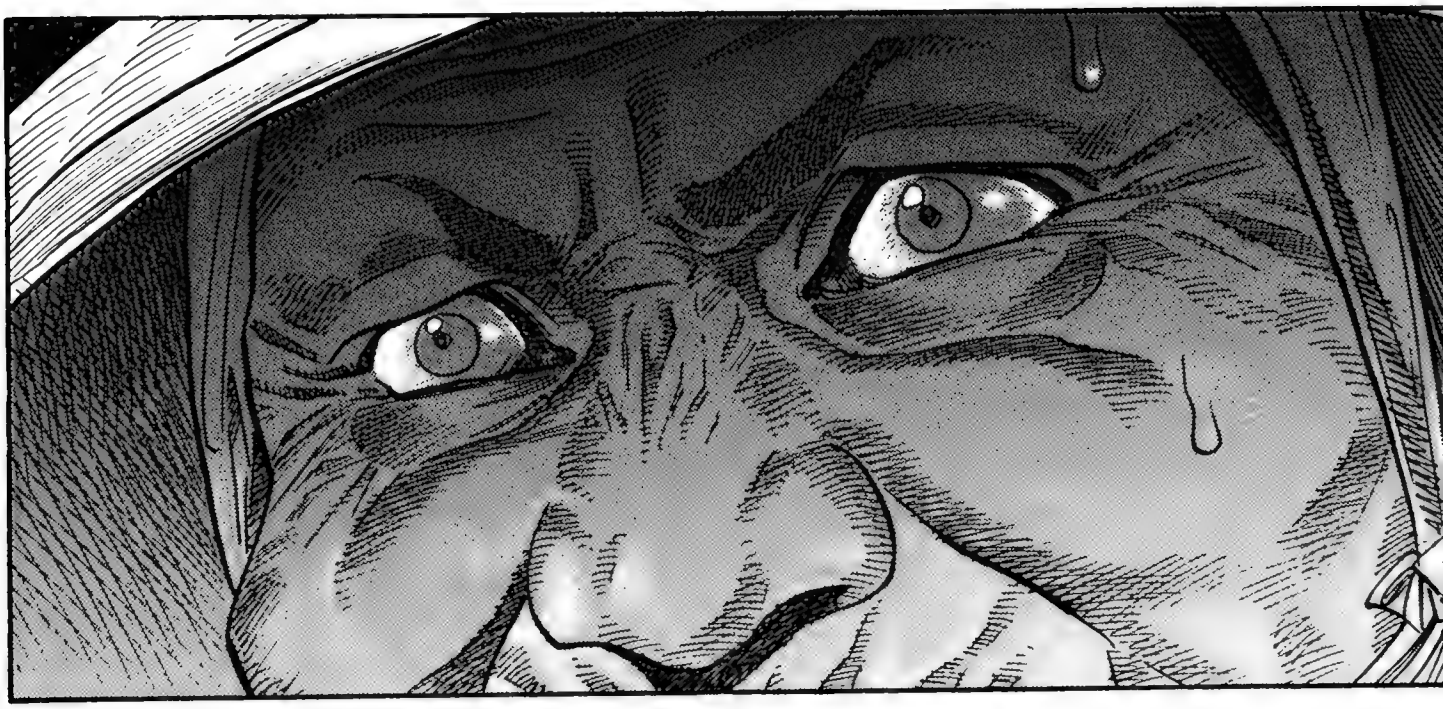

WHY IS MATAHACHI THE ONLY SUSPECT?
WHY ISN'T THAT MAN...THE GUY WHO'S SAID TO HAVE TAKEN ON THE YOSHIOKA ALL BY HIMSELF, WHY ISN'T HE A SUSPECT?


...
ANOTHER READING OF THE CHARACTERS FOR "MUSASHI" IS ...


"MUSASHI"...
...OF MIYAMOTO VILLAGE...?


MIYAMOTO ...
... MUSASHI?

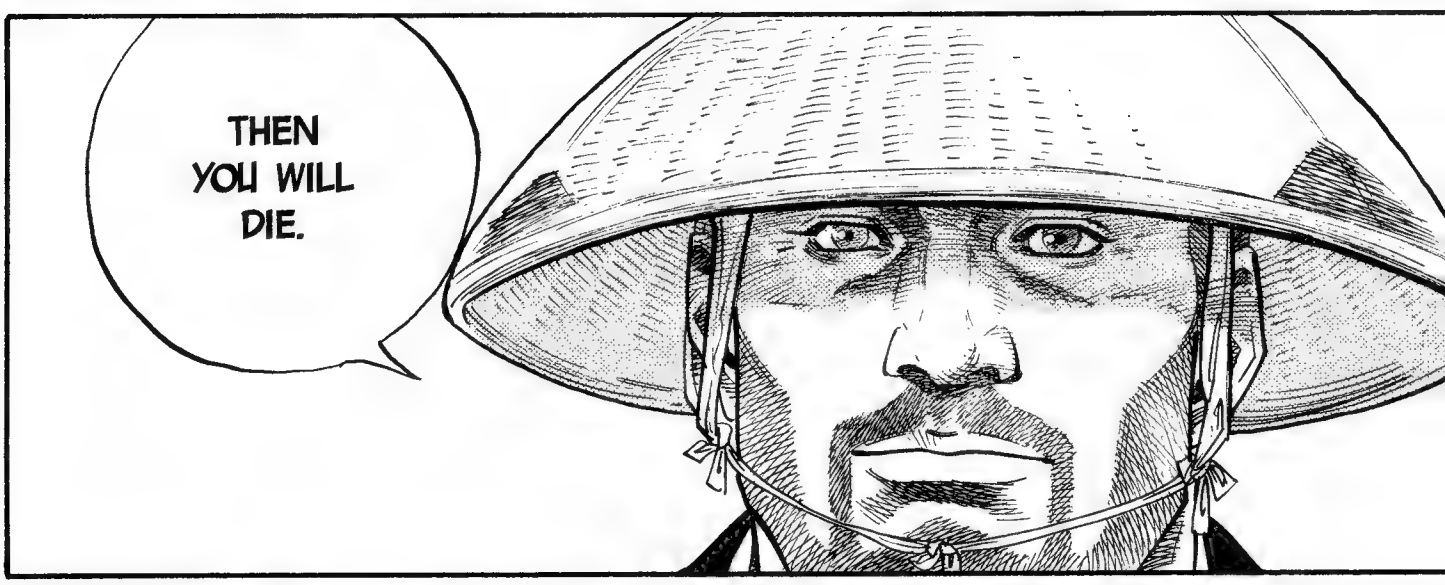

TAKEZŌ!?






I'M DEVOTED TO THE WAY OF THE SWORD.
...MAYBE IT WOULDN'T HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE IF SHE CAME WITH YOU...
OTSŪ'S DISTRACTING YOU, AND SHE'S NOT EVEN HERE.
FWAP
ARE YOU IN LOVE WITH HER?
HMPH!
THE MORE ONE TRIES TO LOOK AWAY, THE MORE ONE GETS PREOCCUPIED.
ONCE YOUR HEART IS PREOCCUPIED...


...YOUR SWORD WILL NOT BE TRUE.


THEN YOU WILL DIE.


LIKE JUST NOW...
...YOU FROZE UP WHEN I MENTIONED OTSŪ.


KRICH
...!!
YOU CARRY EVERYTHING RIGHT HERE...


PREOCCUPIED WITH A SINGLE LEAF...
...YOU WON'T SEE THE TREE.
PREOCCUPIED WITH A SINGLE TREE... YOU'LL MISS THE ENTIRE FOREST.


DON'T BE PREOCCUPIED WITH A SINGLE SPOT.
SEE EVERYTHING IN ITS ENTIRETY...
...EFFORTLESSLY ...


THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS... TO TRULY "SEE."

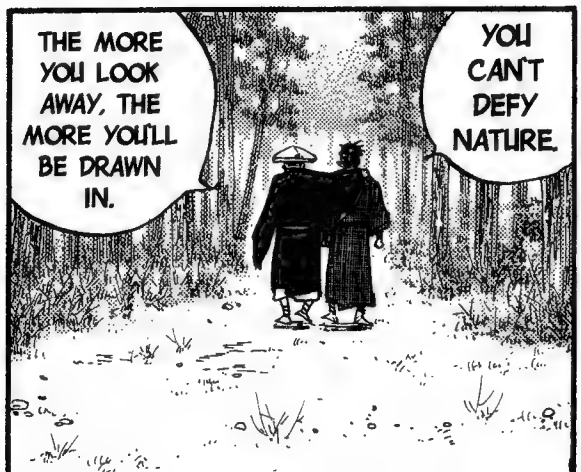

I'VE HAD ENOUGH.
I'M DI-GRESSING.
YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT OTSŪ.


MATAHACHI LEFT HER.
THEY'RE FINISHED.
BESIDES, SHE'S *MATAHACHI'S* FIANCÉE.


TO SEE *EVERYTHING* EFFORTLESSLY...


OTSŪ...
SHE'S WITH THE YAGYŪ CLAN.


AND YOU CALL YOURSELF A MONK.
...


THE MORE YOU LOOK AWAY, THE MORE YOU'LL BE DRAWN IN.
YOU CAN'T DEFY NATURE.

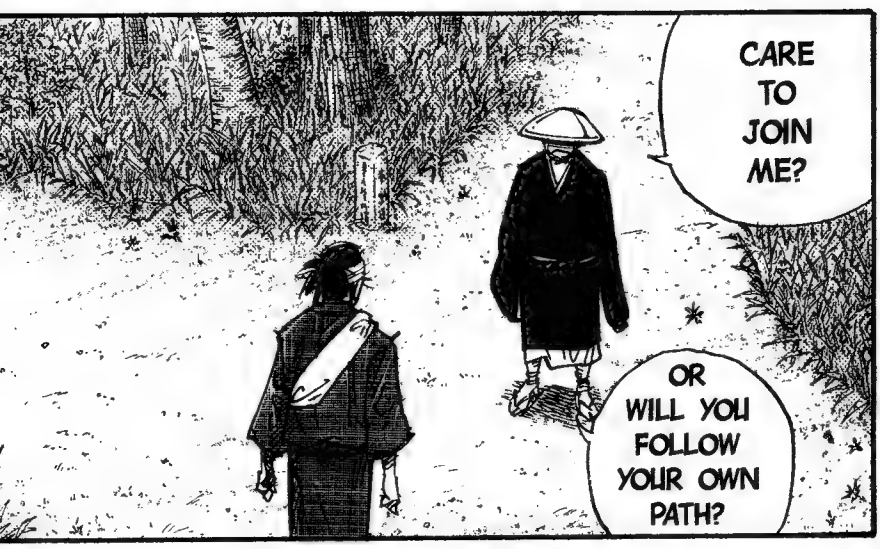

MAN AND WOMAN ...
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO IGNORE YOUR "FEELINGS" FOREVER.
HEE HEE


THE YAGYŪ!?


Vagabond


(LET GO!)
はなせ！


WELL, MUSASHI...
THIS IS WHERE WE GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS.
I'M GOING TO PAY THE YAGYŪ A VISIT.

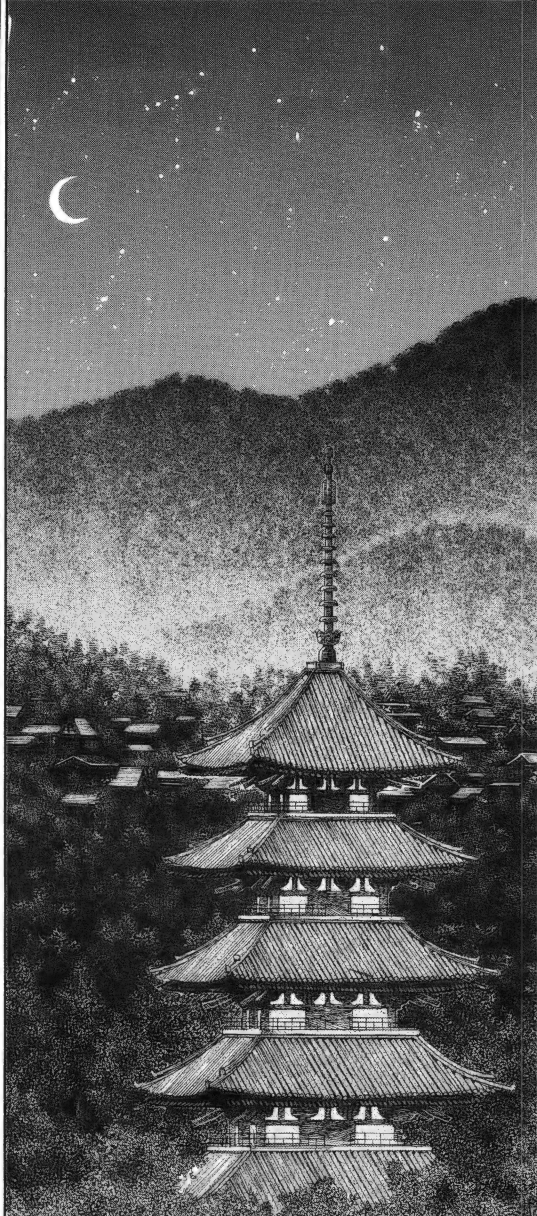

CARE TO JOIN ME?
OR WILL YOU FOLLOW YOUR OWN PATH?


THE YAGYŪ!


...

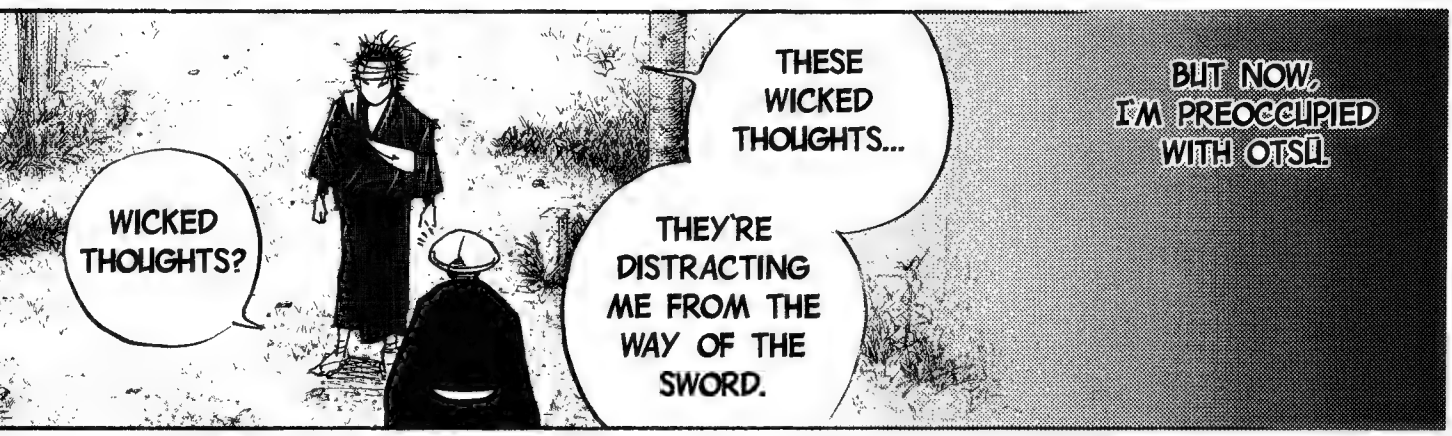


#36 | Hōzōin




HŌZŌIN TEMPLE--A SUB-TEMPLE LOCATED ON THE GROUNDS OF KŌFUKUJI TEMPLE IN NARA.
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
HŌZŌIN TEMPLE IS RENOWNED FOR THE FEROCIOUS SPEAR TECHNIQUE PRACTICED BY ITS MONKS.


BACK WHEN I WAS SEVENTEEN, EVERYONE SHUNNED ME. PEOPLE CALLED ME... DEMON.
BUT AS A SWORDSMAN...
FWICH
FWICH
...I WAS COMPLETELY DEVOTED. I WAS STRONGER BACK THEN.


BUT NOW, I'M PREOCCUPIED WITH OTSŪ.
THESE WICKED THOUGHTS...
THEY'RE DISTRACTING ME FROM THE WAY OF THE SWORD.
WICKED THOUGHTS?

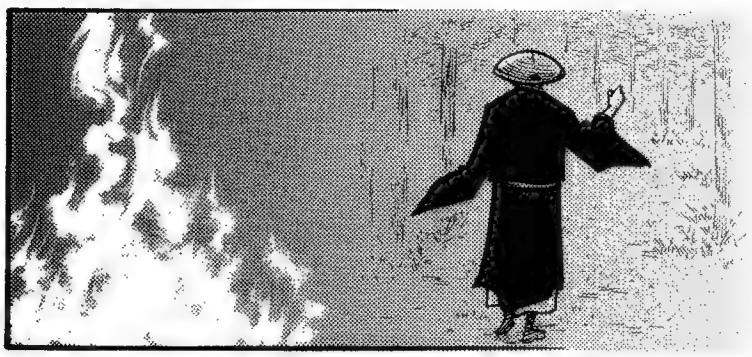

YOUR THOUGHTS AREN'T WICKED. THEY'RE PERFECTLY NATURAL FEELINGS.
YOU *THINK* THESE FEELINGS GO AGAINST THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR. BUT THEY ONLY GET TWISTED AND BENT OUT OF SHAPE WHEN YOU REPRESS THEM AND TRY TO KEEP THEM CONTAINED.
IT'S JUST THAT...
MY THOUGHTS ABOUT HER *ARE.*
NO!!
ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT OTSŪ IS *WICKED?*
I DIDN'T SAY THAT!


AND THE MAN WHO PULLS PRANKS ON ME, *THAT* IS ALSO MUSASHI.
SCRCH SCRCH
MUSASHI...
YOU ARE THE MAN WHO DRIVES HIMSELF TO ALL MANNER OF EXTREMES IN PURSUIT OF THE WAY OF THE SWORD.
YOU ARE ALSO THE MAN WHO DREAMS OF OTSU AND AGONIZES HIMSELF OVER IT.

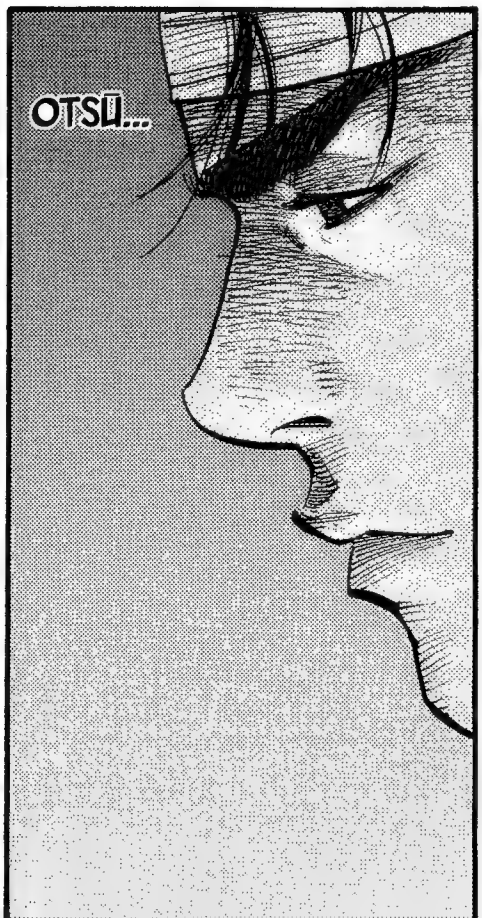

ALL THOSE MEN ARE ASPECTS OF YOUR SELF.
THEY'RE ALL A PART OF YOU.

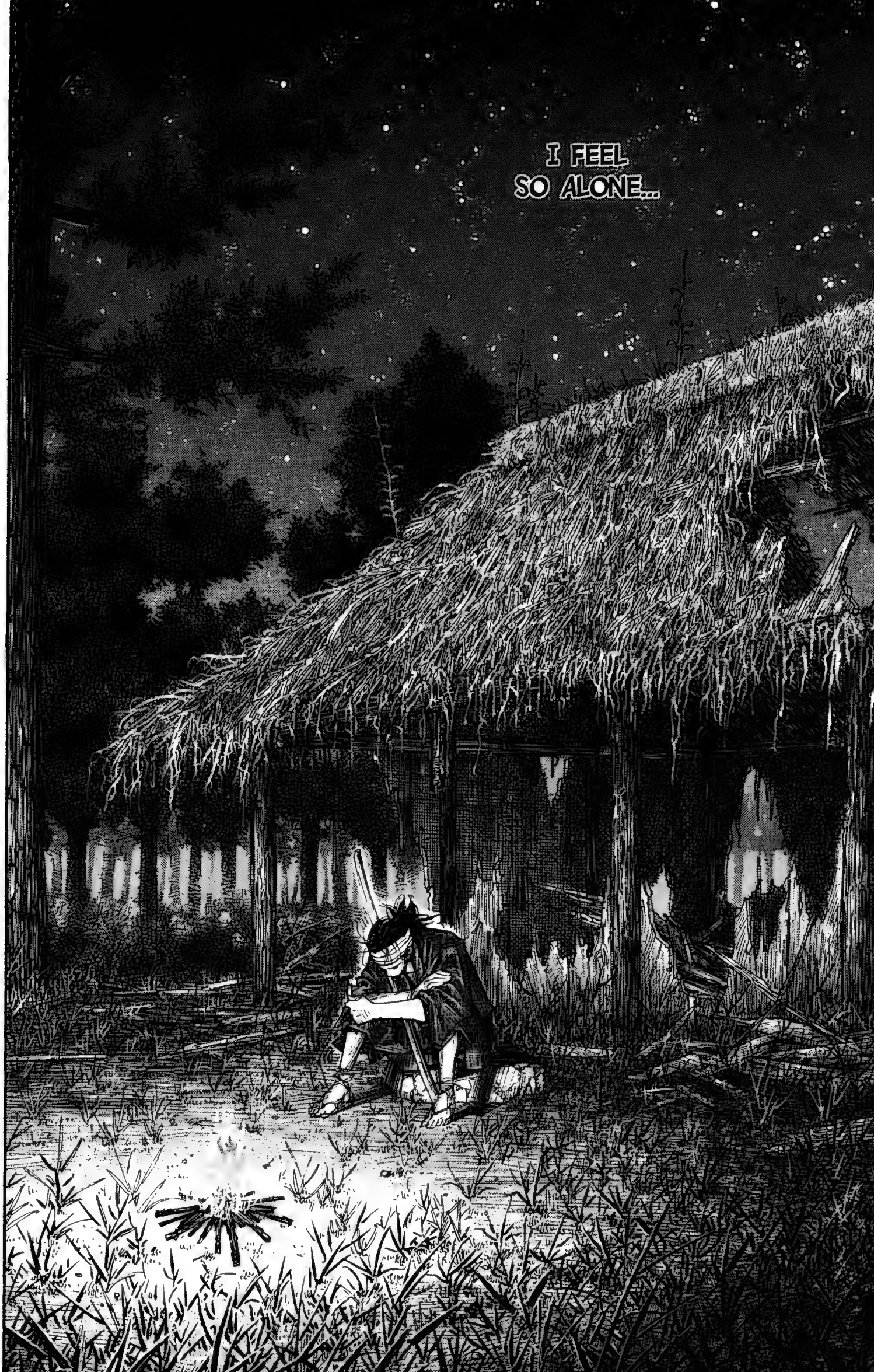

AND ACCEPT YOURSELF AS YOU ARE.
BE AWARE OF YOURSELF.
THAT IS WHERE YOUR TRAINING SHOULD BEGIN.
SHUFF

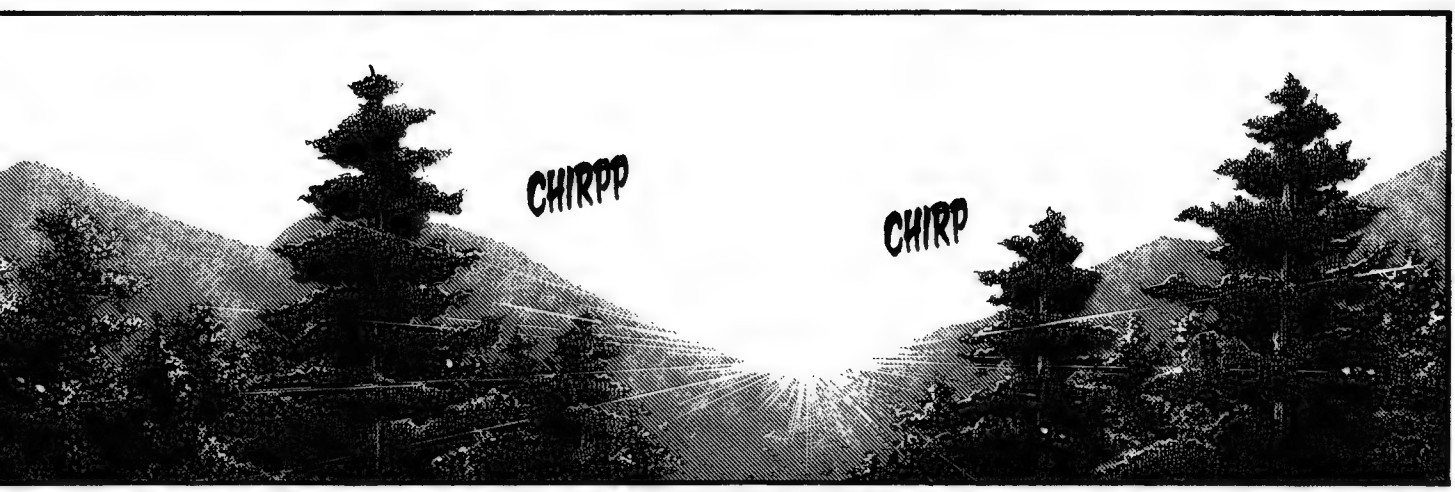

KRAKK!
KRAK



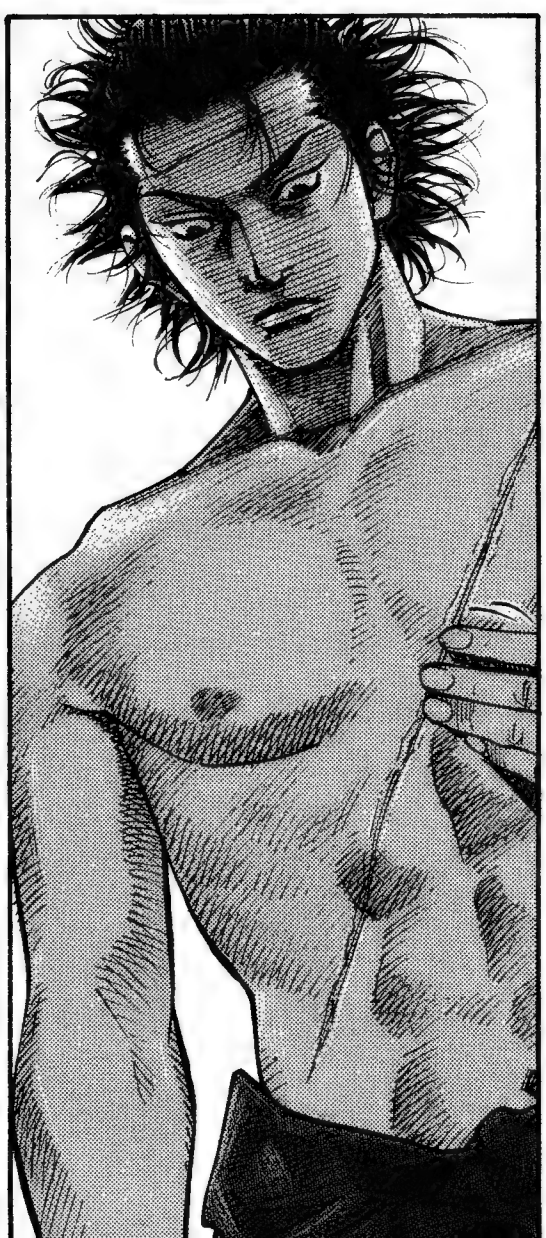

I WANT TO HOLD YOU IN MY ARMS...
I MISS YOU...

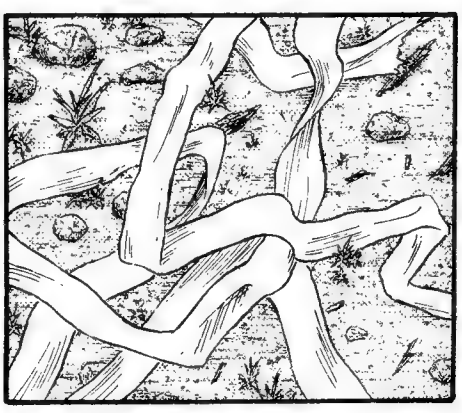

OTSU...

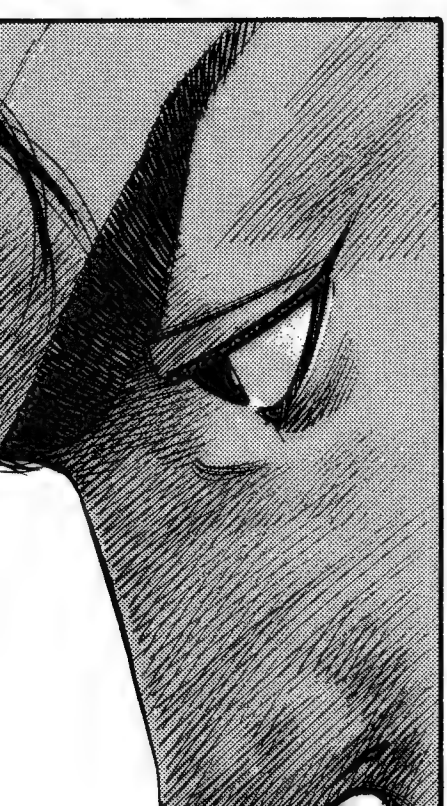

I FEEL
SO ALONE...


CHIRPP
CHIRP












FWISH
PLISH
PLISH


HAH!!


SEIJURŌ!!
FWICH
I WILL DEFEAT YOU BOTH, I SWEAR IT!!
SHOOM
FWISH
PHOSH
DENSHICHIRŌ!!


GASP!
!!
FWOOSH


THE STRONGER THE BETTER!!
I WILL DEFEAT THEM!!
I NEED TO FIND STRONG OPPONENTS!!
KRICH
KRICH
KRICH
KRICH


AND I'LL WIN NO MATTER WHAT!!
KRICH


I'M GOING TO BECOME INVINCIBLE!!
KRICH


IT JUST AIN'T RIGHT.
GROWN ADULTS RUNNING AWAY FROM A LITTLE KID LIKE ME...


...
FUMP


...!!
DON'T HAVE PARENTS.
YOU FOLLOWED ME ALL THIS WAY...?
CAN YOU FIND YOUR WAY BACK TO YOUR PARENTS?
WELL THEN, THE OWNER OF THE TAVERN MUST BE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
HE SEEMED LIKE A GOOD MAN.
...
...
SNF
SNF
...
H-HE...
SNF
SNF
...
HE TOLD ME...


HE'S THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO BECOME YOUR DISCIPLE.
SNIF
SNIF
HE WANTED ME TO LEAVE...
HE SAID, "GO AND SERVE THAT SAMURAI..."
SNIF
SNIF
I WORKED SO HARD FOR HIM, TOO...
BUT I WAS...
SNIF
I WAS JUST A NUISANCE TO HIM.


I HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SURVIVE BY MYSELF...WITHOUT ANYONE'S HELP.
NOW I HAVE NO PLACE TO GO.
SO...
SNIF
I HAVE TO BE STRONG.
I WANT TO BECOME STRONG.
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO BE YOUR DISCIPLE...
SNIF
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO BECOME A SAMURAI...!!


MASTER MIYAMOTO...
IS THAT SO WRONG?


...

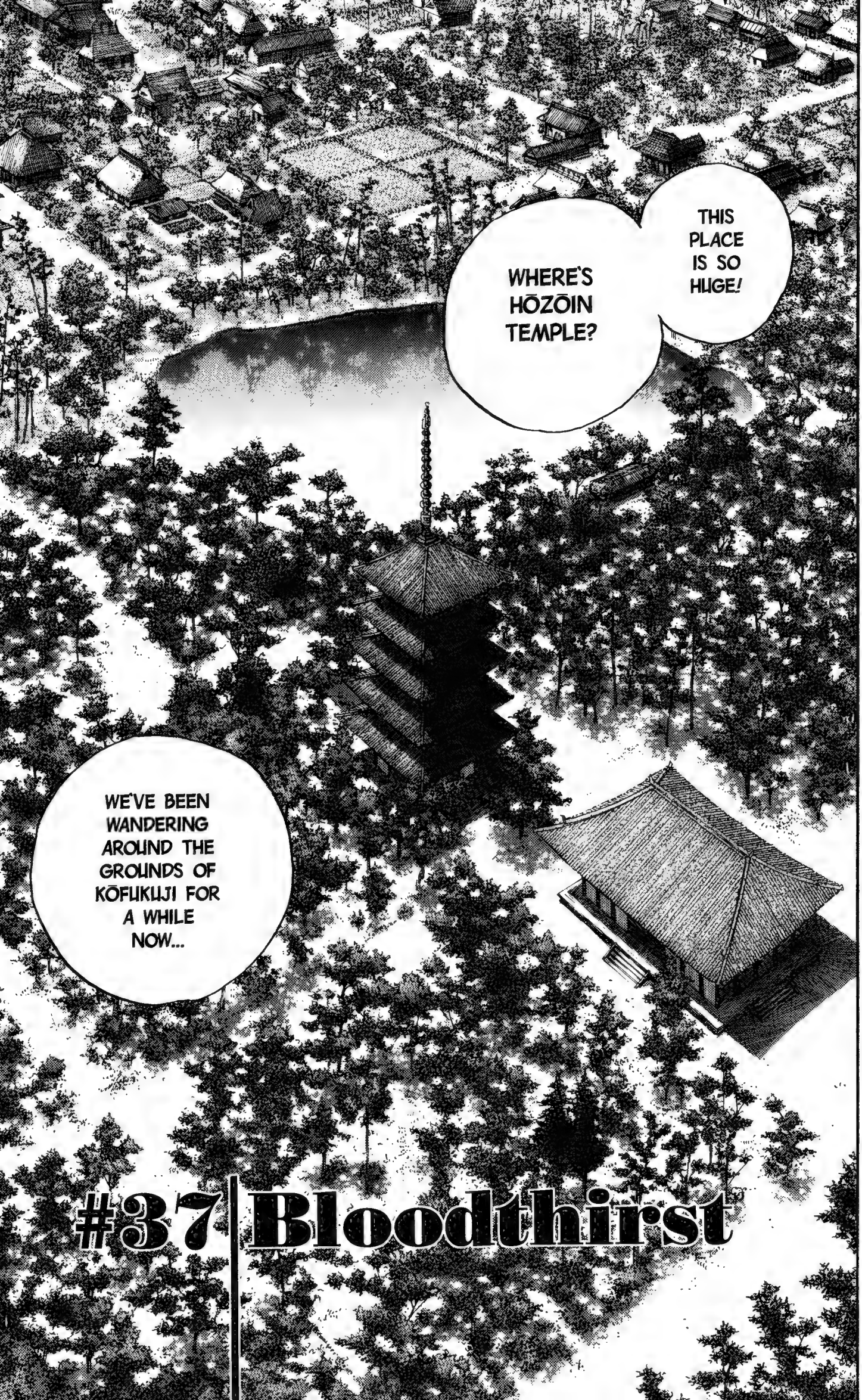

NEITHER OF *US* HAVE HOMES TO GO TO, EITHER.
THERE'S THIS GIRL I'M IN LOVE WITH.
JŌTARŌ...


I'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT *SHE'S* MY REASON FOR LIVING.
HUH?
BUT...
JŌTARŌ, LET'S BECOME STRONGER TOGETHER.

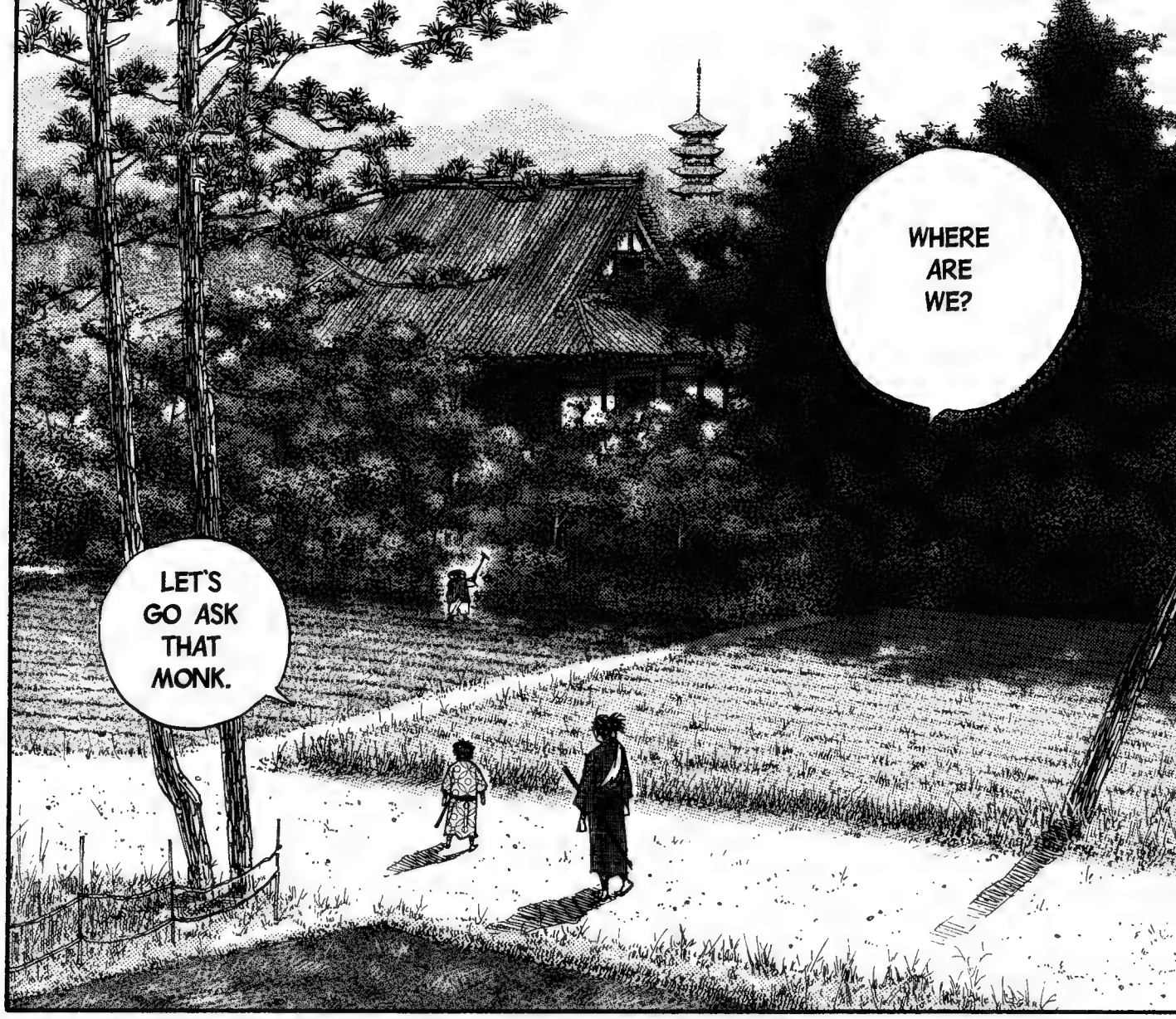

LET'S GO TO HŌZŌIN TEMPLE...
I'M GOING TO DEFEAT THEIR FAMOUS SPEAR TECHNIQUE.


Vagabond

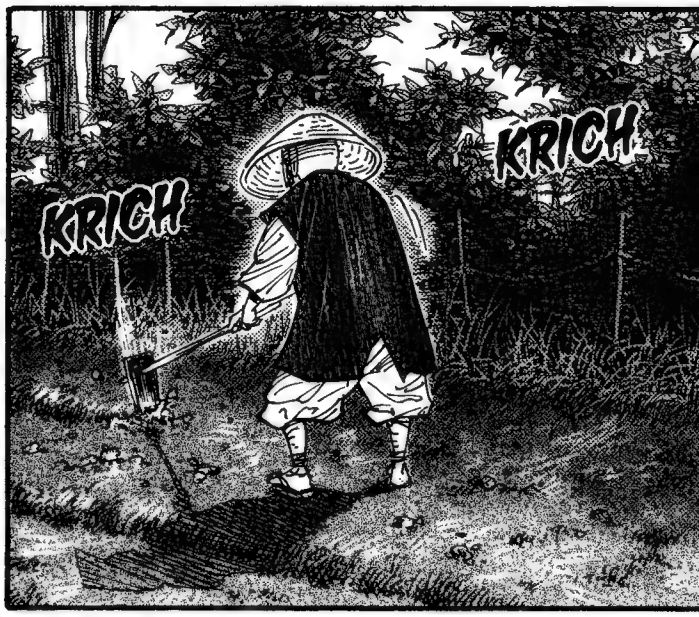

(I'M CRYING AGAIN...)
また涙が…



#37 Bloodthirst


WHERE ARE WE?
LET'S GO ASK THAT MONK.

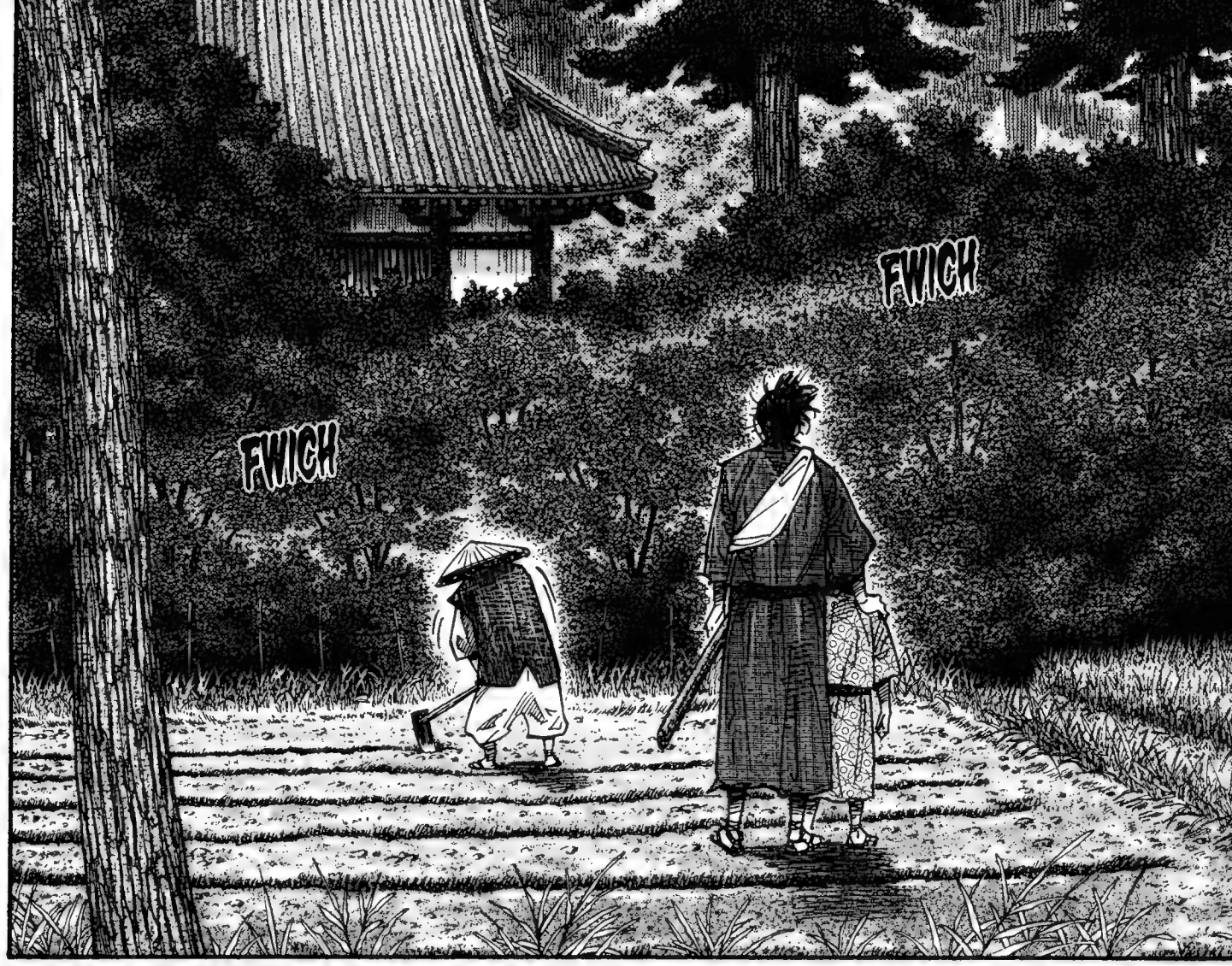

HEY!
DO YOU KNOW THE WAY TO HŌZŌIN?


KRICH
KRICH


...


THAT OLD MAN MUST BE DEAF.
TP
TP
TP
H-E-Y!!
FWICH
HUH?


!!
WHUNK
FWICH
JŌTARŌ! WAIT!
HUH?
FWOOSH


FWICH
FWICH


?


HEY!


FWICH
FWICH

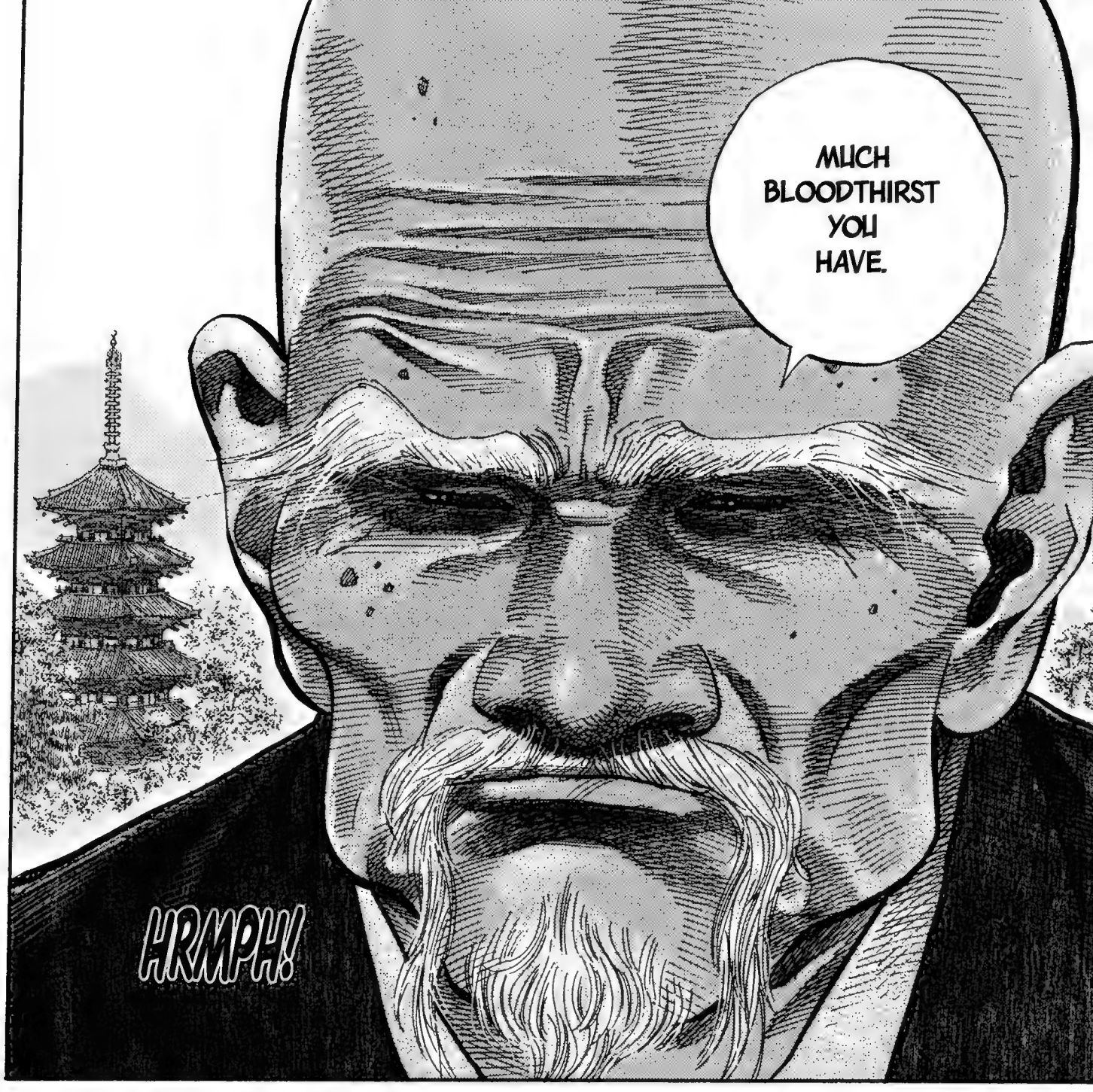

MASTER, WHAT'S WRONG?



...


WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
I SENSED SUCH MURDEROUS BLOODTHIRST...
WAS IT JUST MY IMAGINATION? I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO ATTACK...


HRMPH!
YOUNG MAN...


MUCH BLOODTHIRST YOU HAVE.
HRMPH!


HUH?


YOU FEEL THE NEED TO CUT DOWN A DECREPIT OLD MAN, DO YOU?


TFOK
YAHHH!
!!
NNGH...
THWUNK


YOU'VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE...
...OF BEING DEFEATED BY AGON OF HŌZŌIN.

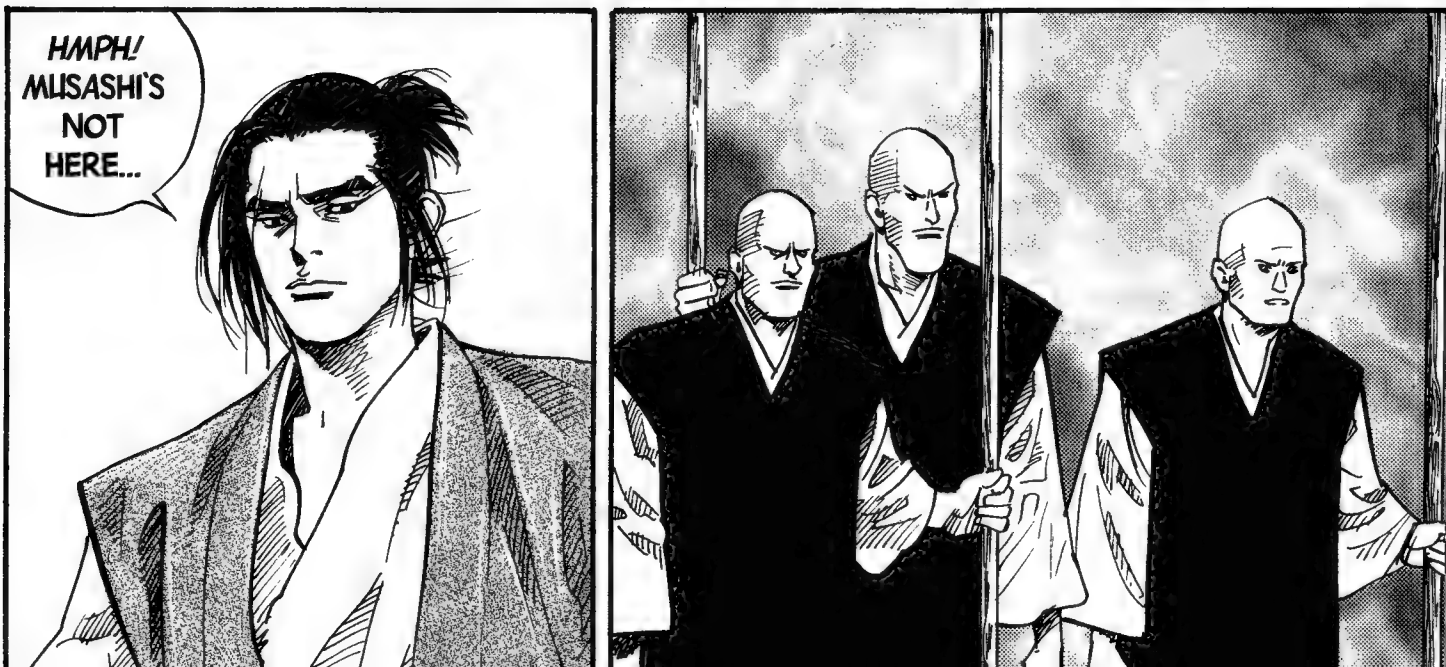

...
NEXT...
THAT'S ME.

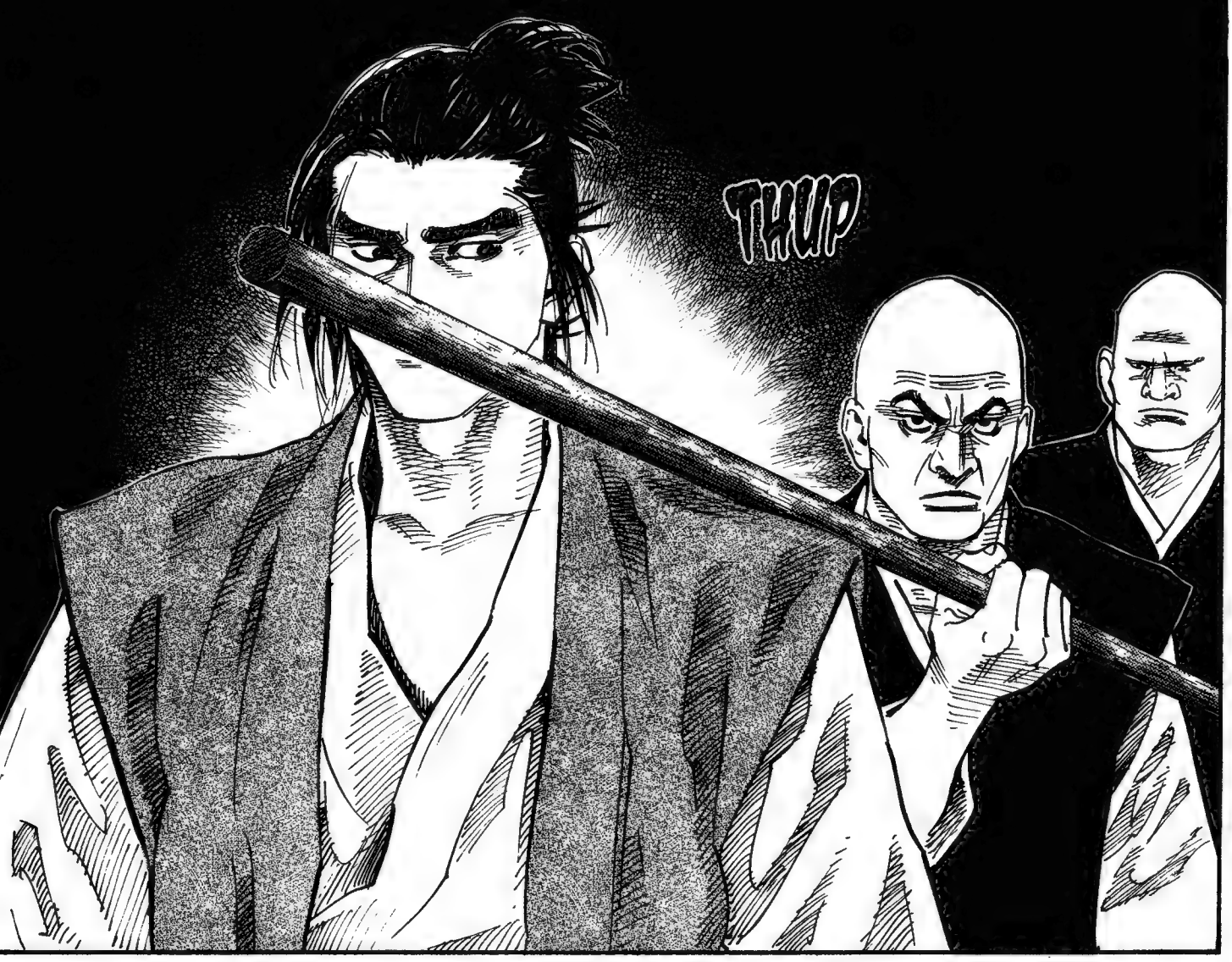

THUD
AYAHHH!!
THUD
YAHHH!!
KRICH
...
NNGH!
THUP
YAYAHH!!
THUP
THUP
THWAK


YOU'VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE ...
...OF BEING DEFEATED BY AGON OF HŌZŌIN.
FSSHOOM
FP
MY FRIEND...
YOU WILL HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING CUT DOWN BY GION TŌJI!


SORRY...
HEH HEH...
I JUST COULDN'T RESIST MIMICKING THAT LINE OF YOURS.
HUH!?

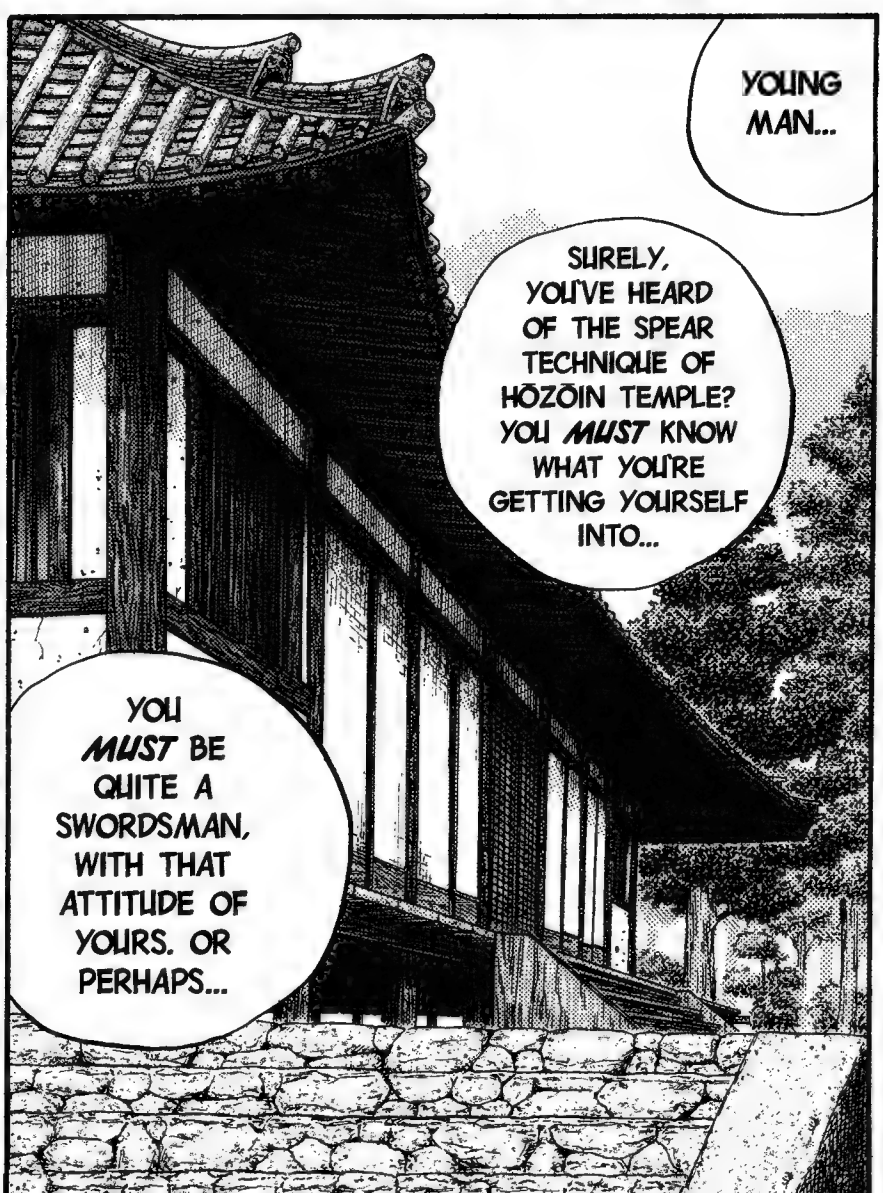

HMM...

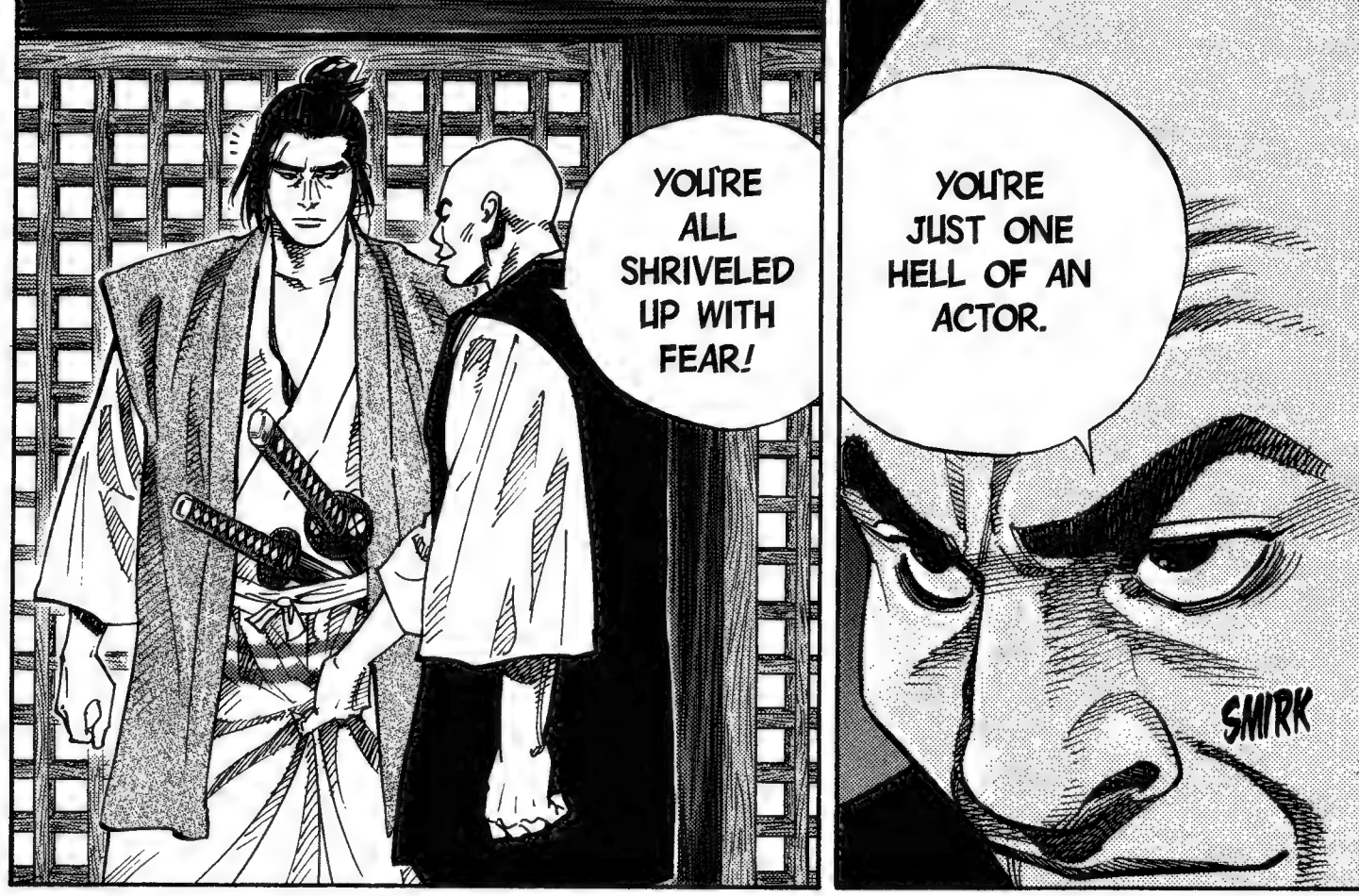

HMPH! MUSASHI'S NOT HERE...


THUP

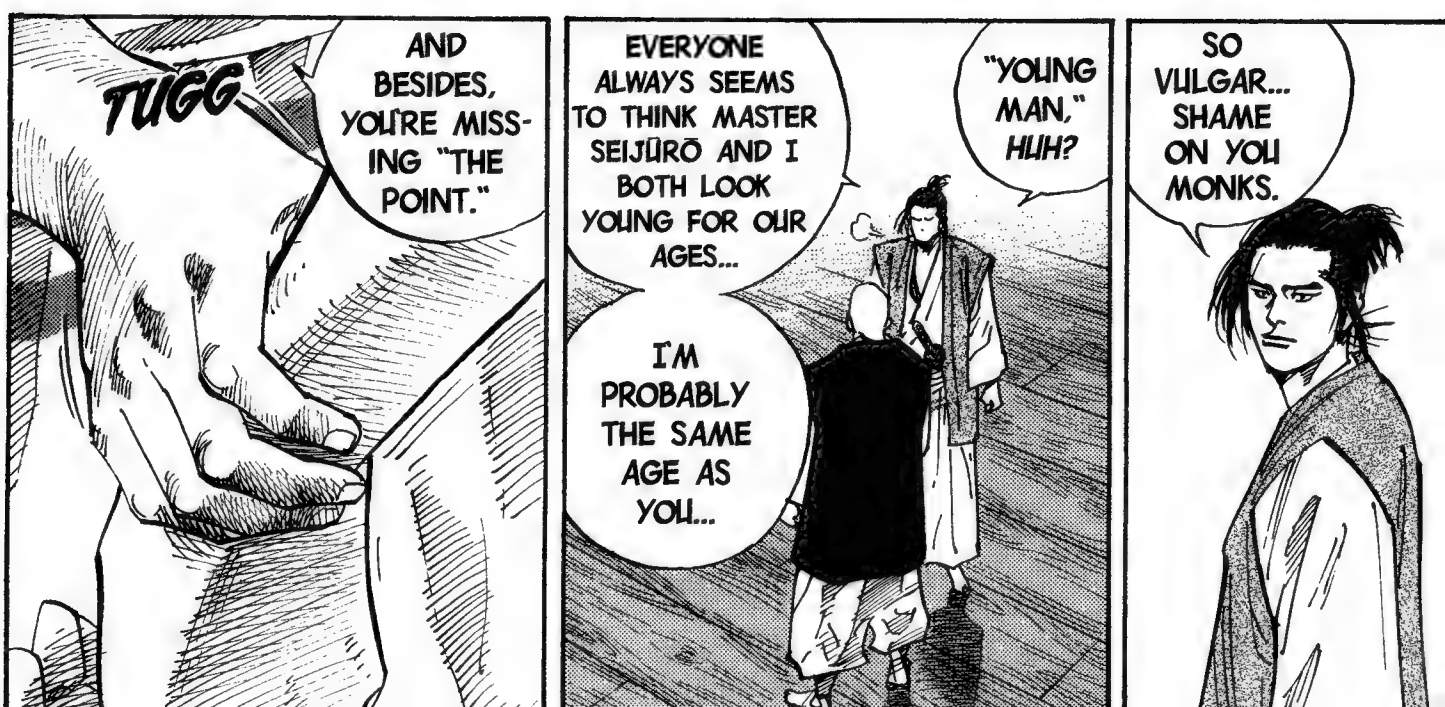



FP


YOUNG MAN...
SURELY, YOU'VE HEARD OF THE SPEAR TECHNIQUE OF HŌZŌIN TEMPLE? YOU *MUST* KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING YOURSELF INTO...
YOU *MUST* BE QUITE A SWORDSMAN, WITH THAT ATTITUDE OF YOURS. OR PERHAPS...


YOU'RE ALL SHRIVELED UP WITH FEAR!
YOU'RE JUST ONE HELL OF AN ACTOR.
SMIRK


HA HA
BETTER GIVE YOUR SHORT SWORD A FEW ACTING LESSONS, TOO!!
MAYBE IF YOU BEG FOR OUR FORGIVENESS WE'LL LET YOU GO!!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!!


TUGG
AND BESIDES, YOU'RE MISSING "THE POINT."
EVERYONE ALWAYS SEEMS TO THINK MASTER SEIJŪRŌ AND I BOTH LOOK YOUNG FOR OUR AGES...
I'M PROBABLY THE SAME AGE AS YOU...
"YOUNG MAN," HUH?
SO VULGAR... SHAME ON YOU MONKS.


YOU! SEE, I LEAN TO THE RIGHT.
!!
FWOMM
AGON!!
...
!!
H-HE'S NOT BLUFFING!?
...
NAW, HE'S JUST A FOOL... NOW HE'S FINISHED.
HE'S FEARLESS...


FWICH


...
HMPH...
I SUPPOSE A GOOD FIGHT'LL BREAK THE MONOTONY OF MY TRAVELS.

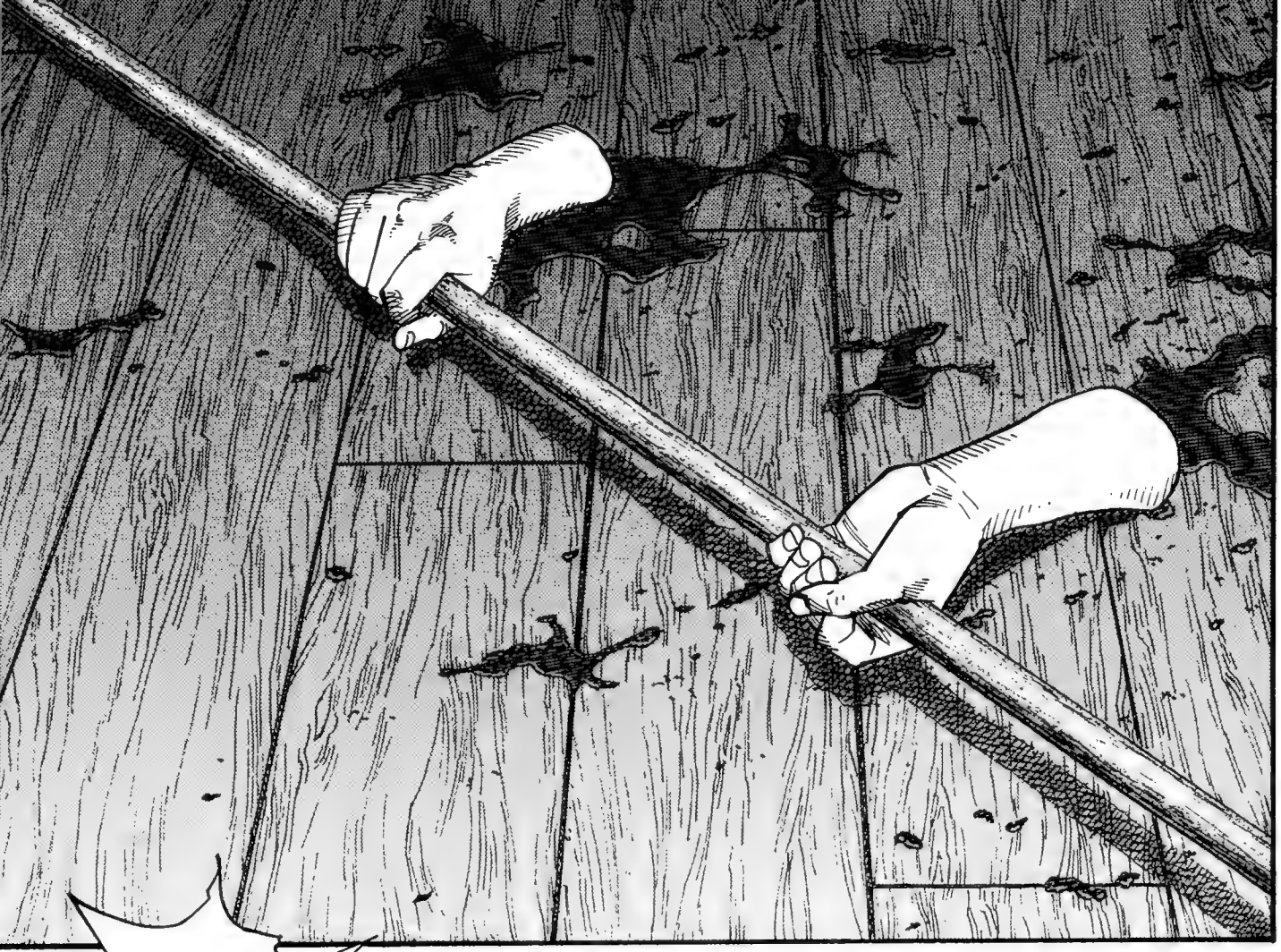

!!
A REAL SWORD...!?
YOU PREFER A WOODEN PRACTICE SWORD, PERHAPS?
I DON'T CARE!! COME ON!!
RIGHT.
ZWING
THUP
THUP
THUP
YAAHHH!!


SLISSH


Vagabond



(HRMPH HRMPH)



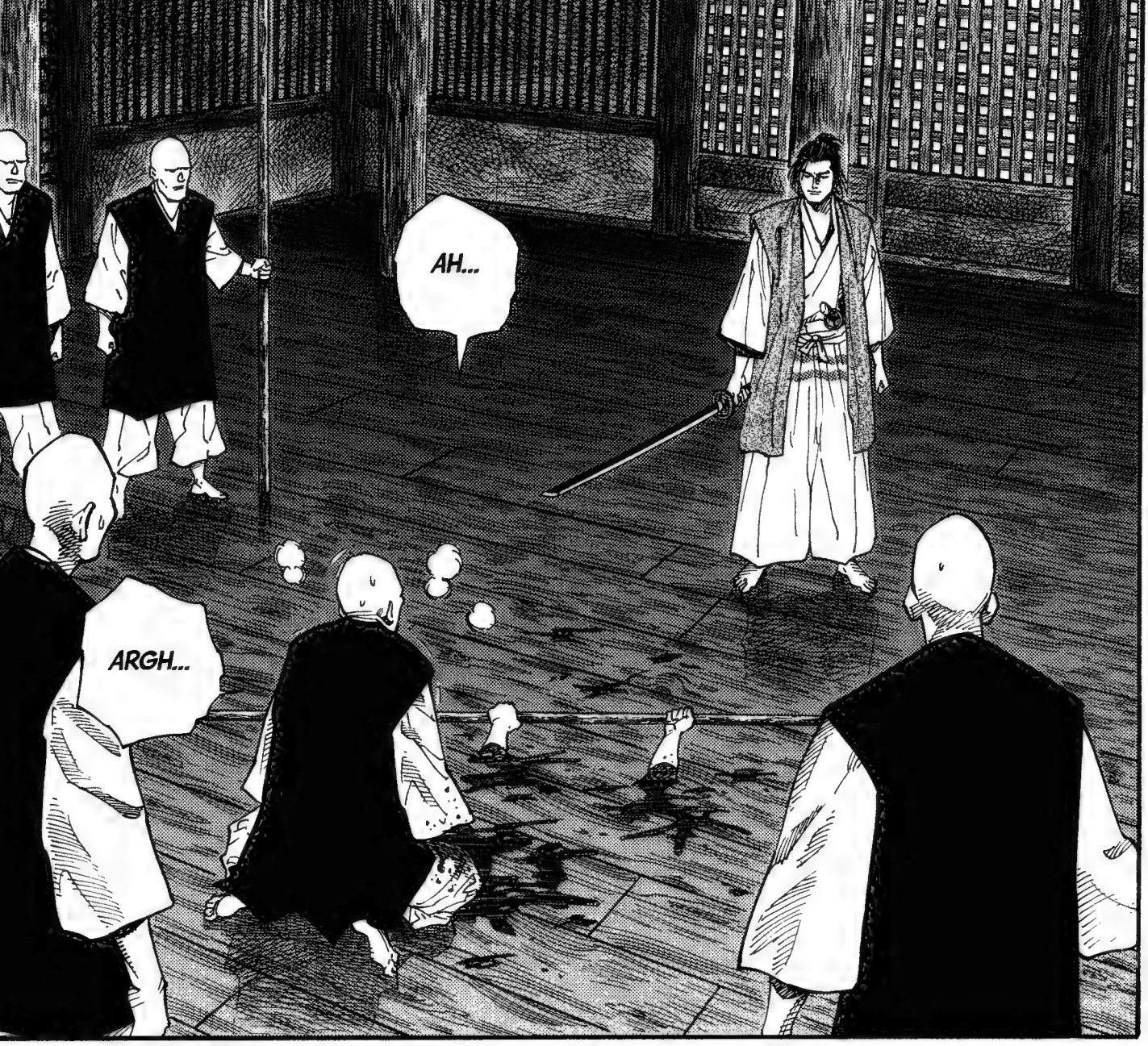






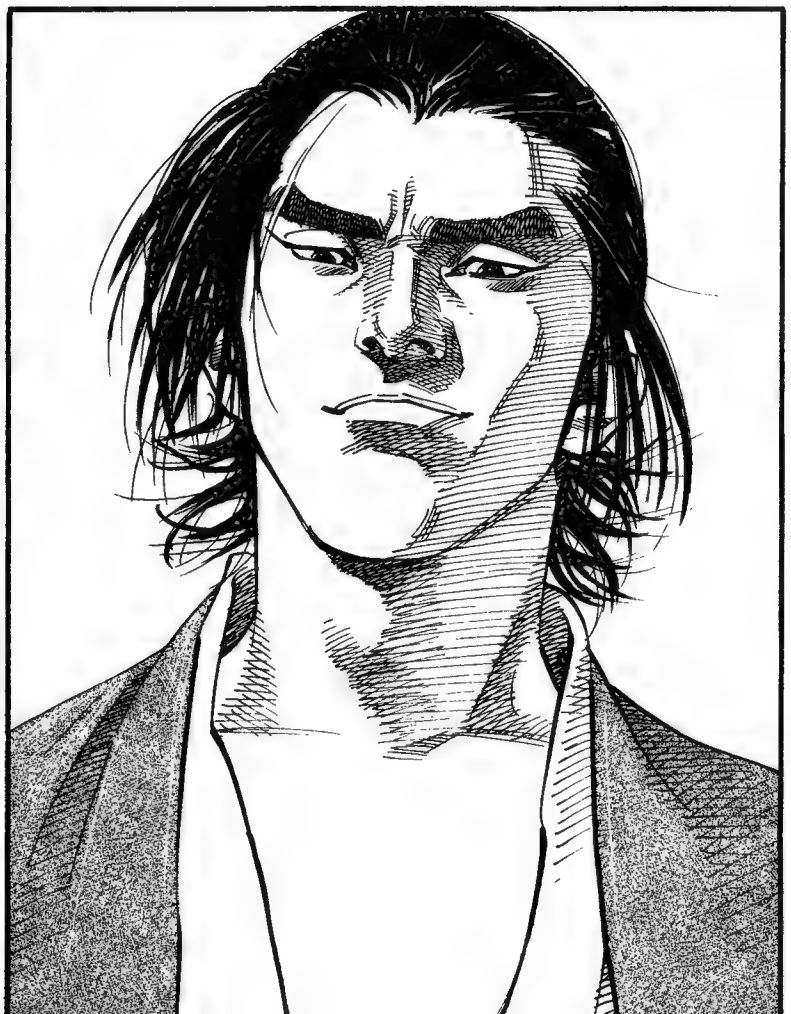
#38 Graceless




AH...
ARGH...


...


Y-
YOU...
YOU
BASTARD!!



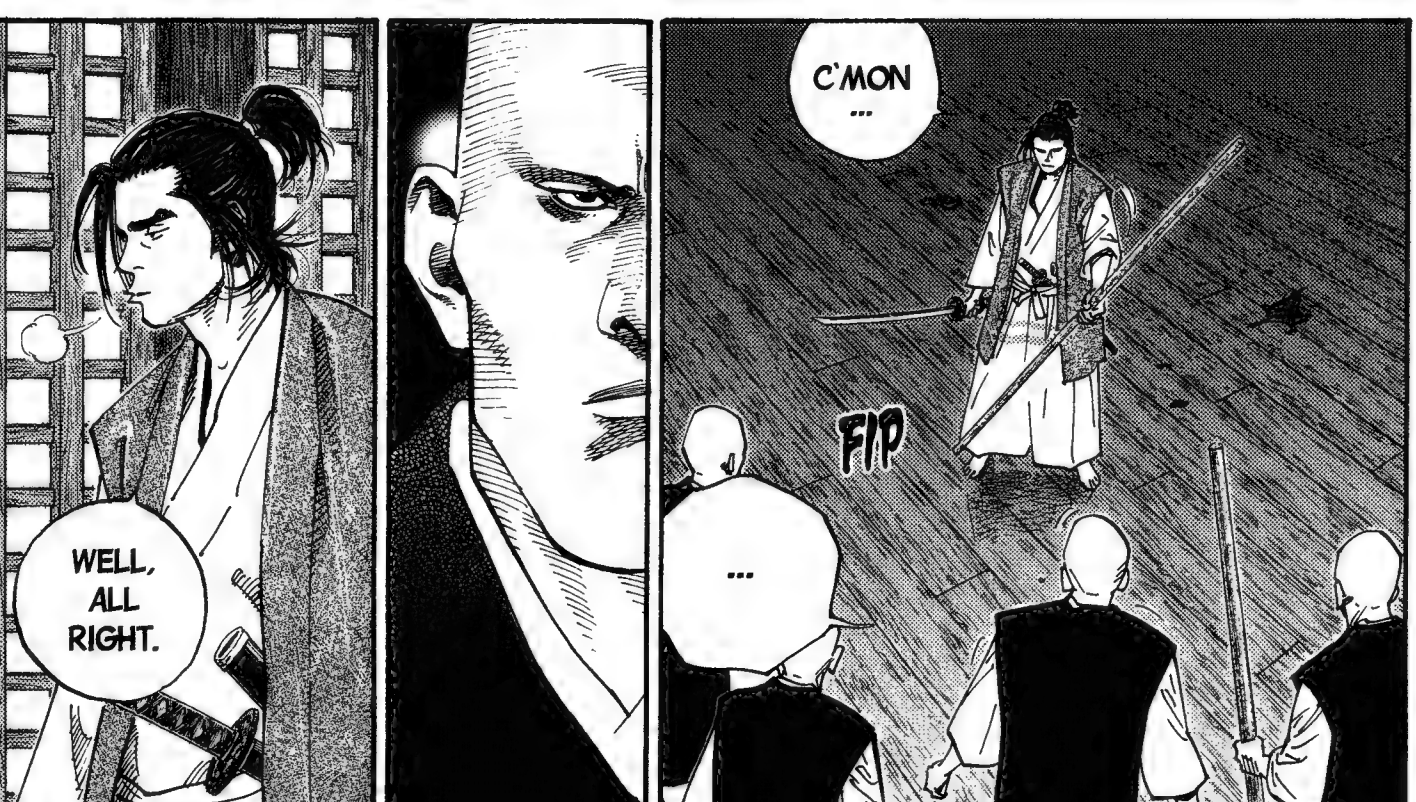

...
FP
THMP
THUD




GASP!!


NEXT.
...!!




C'MON
...
FIP
...
WELL, ALL RIGHT.


CHAK
ONE PERSON A DAY IS ENOUGH.




I'LL BE BACK TOMORROW.


WE'LL SEE IF MIYAMOTO MUSASHI SHOWS UP...
...BEFORE I'M THROUGH WITH THE REST OF YOU.


SEE YOU TOMORROW.
YOU BETTER *HOPE* HE SHOWS UP SOON.


...
...


GION
TŌJI...


I'M DONE WITH YOU. NOW LEAVE...
HŌZŌIN HAS NO NEED FOR COWARDS.


SUCH BLOODTHIRST....


YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE ME, BUT...
...YOU HAVE IT ALL WRONG.


I FELT LIKE *YOU* WERE GOING TO STRIKE *ME* WITH THAT HOE.
OR WAS I JUST IMAGINING THINGS?


YOUNG ONE...YOU HOLD SUCH AGGRESSION IN YOU.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO *KILL* ME.
...


HMPH
BAH! YOU'RE STILL WET BEHIND THE EARS...
!?
MUSASHI...
HMPH
YOU HAVE NO GRACE.
M-MI ...
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.

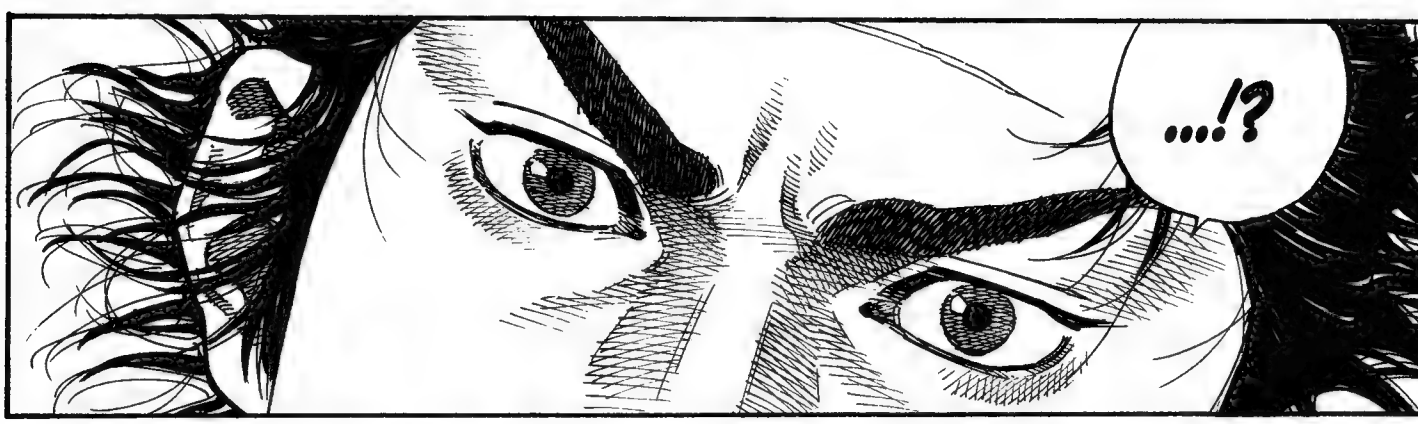

IT'S THAT CLUMSY BLOODTHIRST OF YOURS.
BAH!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN!?
HRMPH
WHAT!?
YOU BETTER NOT INSULT MY MASTER!
GASP!
GLARE


YAHHH!!

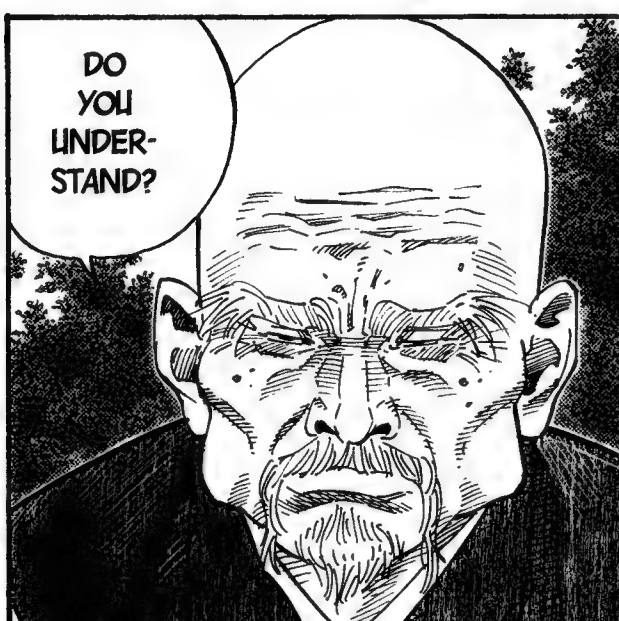

FWOOSH
!!


PTU...
...
HAK!
HUH?
THAT'S HOW YOU ACTED TOWARDS ME.
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
THAT BLOOD-THIRST OF YOURS...
CLUMSY... GRACE-LESS...
YOU THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO ATTACK YOU WITH MY HOE?
HRMPH...


ME AS WELL AS OTHERS--WE ARE ONLY MIRRORS REFLECTING *YOUR OWN* BLOODTHIRST.
THAT WAS *YOUR* BLOODTHIRST.

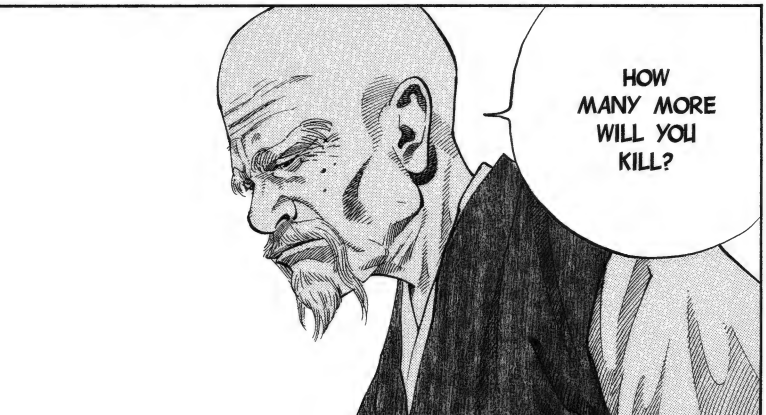

...!?


...
?
?
HRMPH...


DO YOU UNDER-STAND?


HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE YOU KILLED?
YOU MUST HAVE FACED SO MANY ENEMIES THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE...
BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND...
ENEMIES THEY WERE *NOT*...UNTIL *YOU* FORCED THEM TO BECOME SO...
HRMPH...


YOUR OWN BLOODTHIRST...
...TURNS EVERYONE YOU ENCOUNTER AGAINST YOU.


HOW MANY MORE WILL YOU KILL?




YOU'RE JUST CLUMSY AND GRACELESS.
THAT'S NOT TRUE STRENGTH.
HRMPH...
...!!


WHAT WAS THAT OLD MAN TALKING ABOUT!?
HE SHOULD HAVE JUST GIVEN US DIRECTIONS TO HŌZŌIN!!

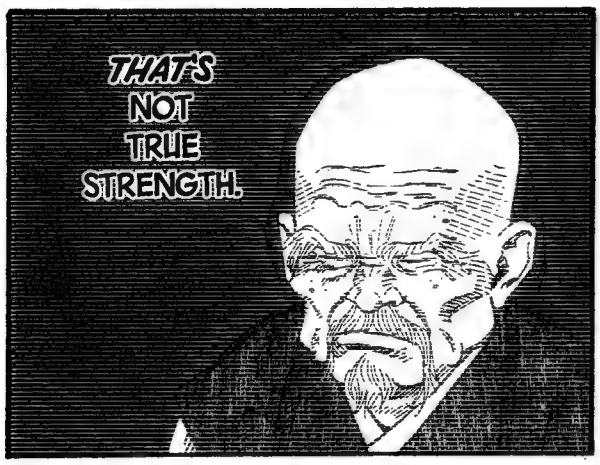

HEY!
THE SIGN SAYS IT'S *THAT* WAY.
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.


ALL THIS NONSENSE ABOUT BLOODTHIRST AND BEING GRACELESS.
KRICH
KRICH
I WAS WAITING FOR YOU TO GET ANGRY AND CUT HIM DOWN.


...


THMP THMP
THE SPEAR TECHNIQUE OF HŌZŌIN!
I'M GETTING EXCITED!


HEY...
KRICH
MASTER!?

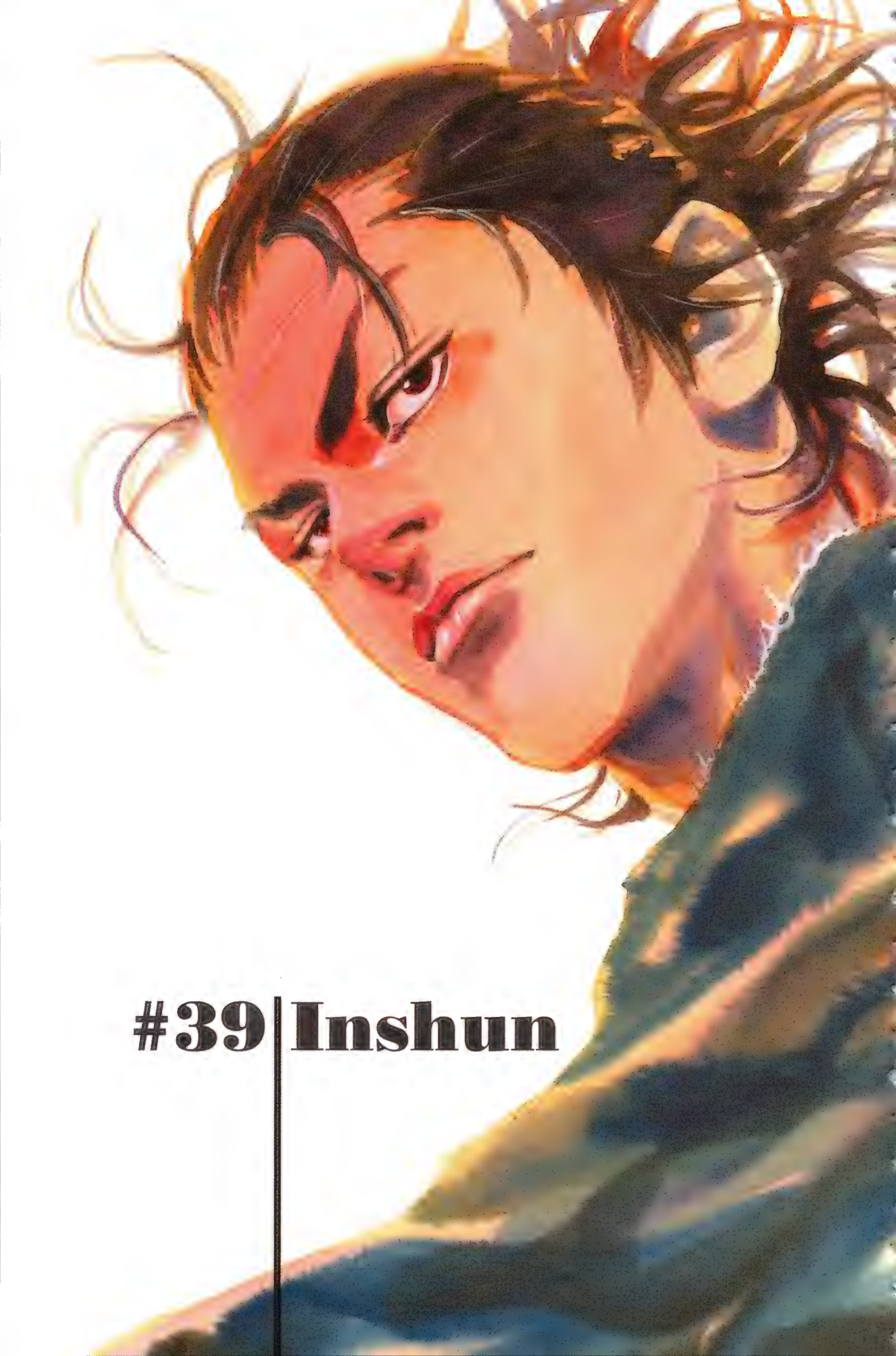

THAT'S NOT TRUE STRENGTH.


CLUMSY AND GRACE-LESS...

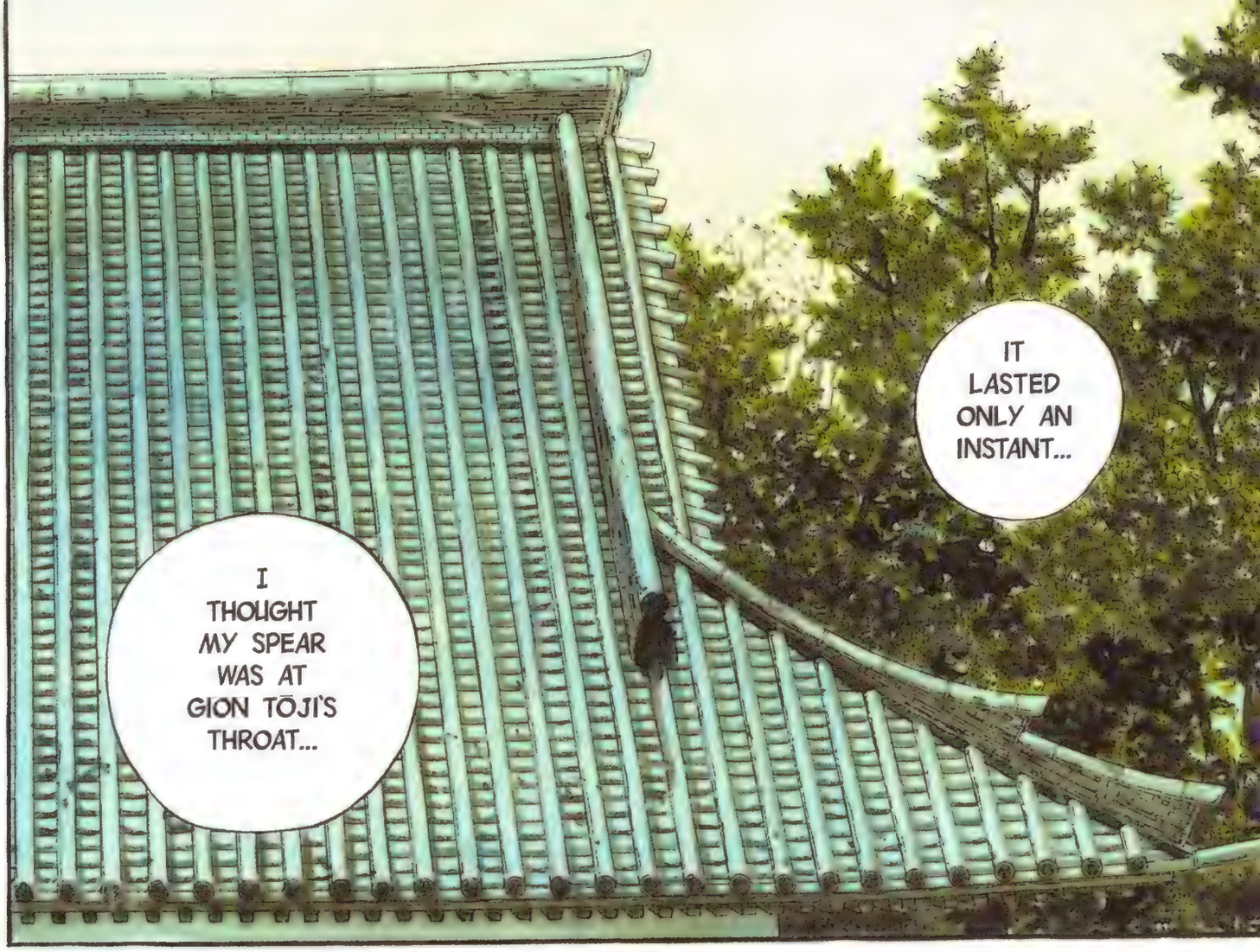

I DON'T UNDER-STAND!!
WHO *WAS* THAT OLD MAN!?
TRUE STRENGTH...
KRICH
KRICH


Vagabond


(KOFF!)
(PTU!)



#39 | Inshun


I THOUGHT MY SPEAR WAS AT GION TŌJI'S THROAT...
IT LASTED ONLY AN INSTANT...


BUT MY SPEAR... MY ARMS... THEY WENT FLYING...!!


UNGH...

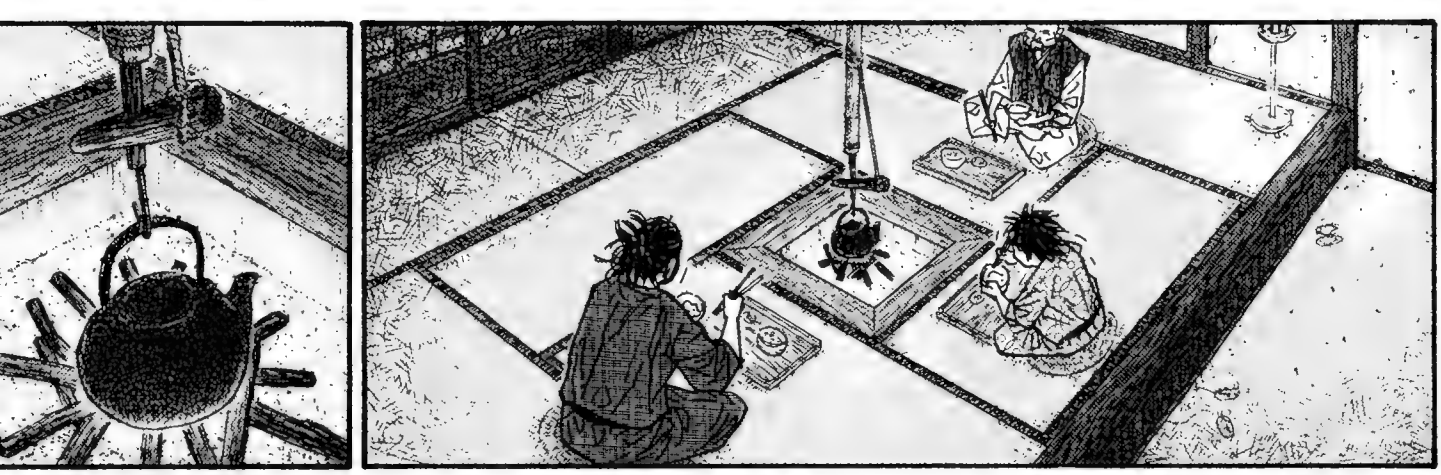

UNGH...


AND THEN?
...!!
AGON!!
THANKFULLY, AGON SAID HE WOULD TAKE ON GION TŌJI.
I KNOW NOTHING MORE...I DIDN'T EVEN SEE HIS SWORD STRIKE...
I SEE!!


I WANNA FIGHT GION TŌJI!!
LET ME TAKE HIM ON!
FWUD
HM...!?







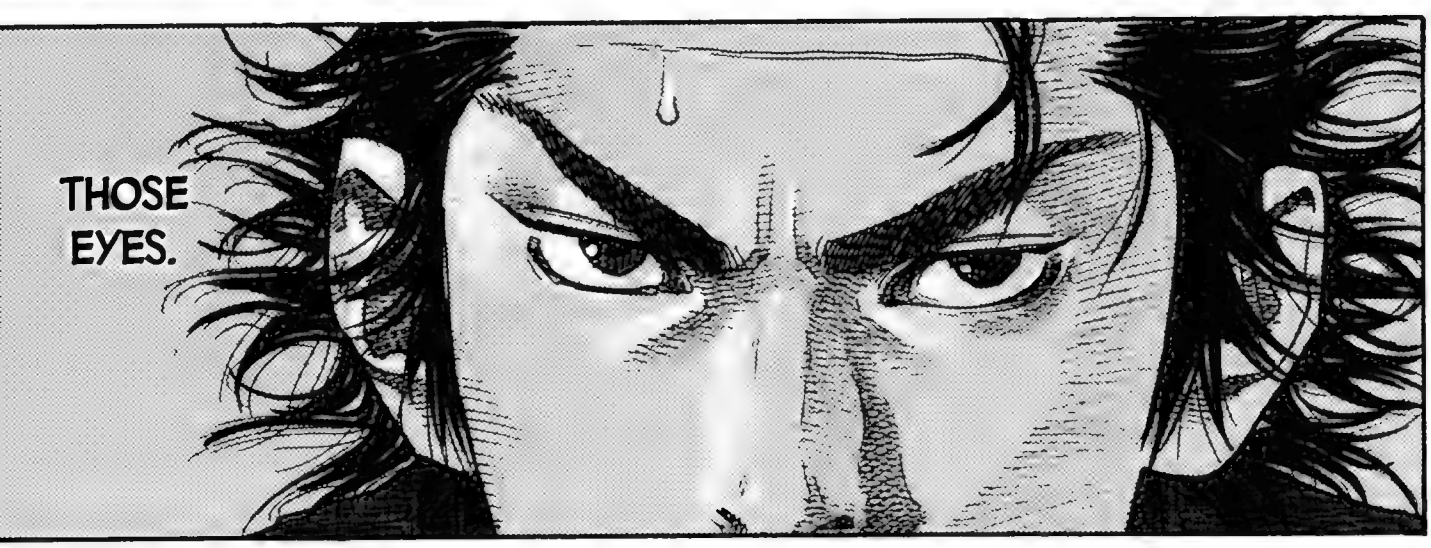


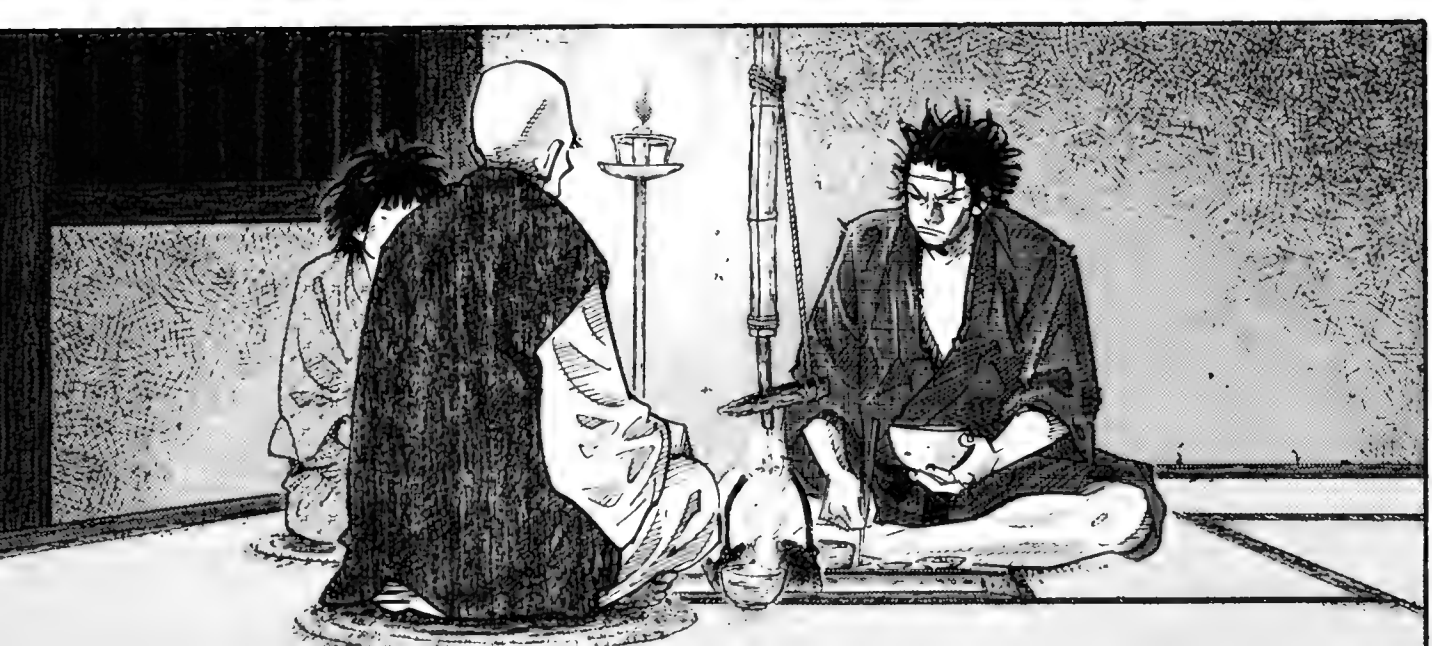

HUH?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT...
...TRUE STRENGTH.
MNCH
MNCH
GULP
WHAT DID YOU MEAN!?


THINK YOU ARE STRONG, DO YOU...?
SO...


WELL...
...




THOSE
EYES.

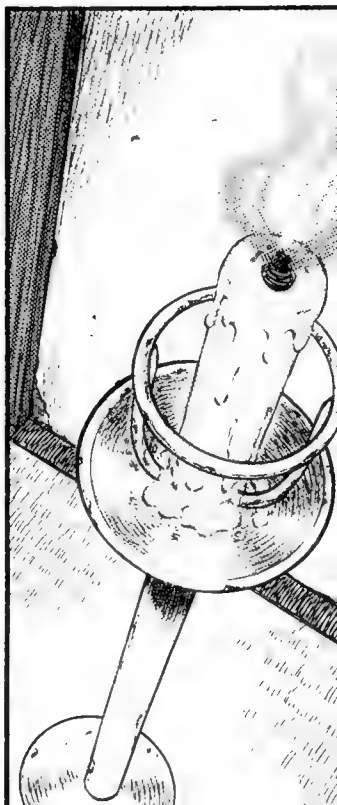



WHEN HE LOOKS AT ME WITH THOSE EYES.
I FEEL LIKE HE CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH ME...


WHAT A STRANGE OLD MAN...!!


I'VE GOTTEN THIS FAR FIGHTING WITH MY OWN STYLE.


TO BE HONEST, I DON'T KNOW.




I REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW STRONG I AM.
I FEEL LIKE I *AM* REALLY STRONG...
...BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I FEEL LIKE THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHERS STRONGER THAN ME.


HMM...


...WHEN YOU YOURSELF BECOME TRULY STRONG.
YOU CAN ONLY PERCEIVE WHAT TRUE STRENGTH IS...


HUH?



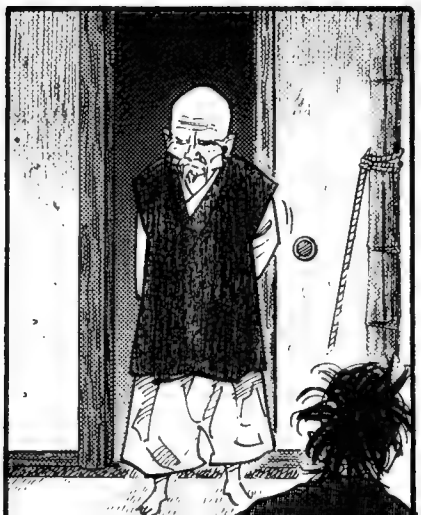

AS LONG AS YOU LIVE IN THAT NARROW WORLD OF YOURS YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.
URK
!!


HUH?

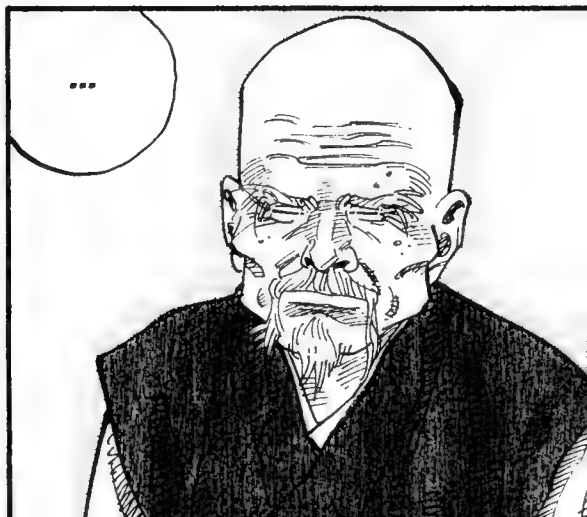

HAH!!
IF I'M NOT STRONG, THEN SO BE IT!!
MNCH
MNCH
IF YOU ARE SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN...
YOU'LL NEVER REALIZE HOW TRULY VAST IT IS...
I'LL JUST MAKE MY WAY UP, STEP BY STEP...
I'LL DEFEAT STRONG OPPONENTS ONE AFTER THE OTHER!!


I'LL MOVE UP THREE STEPS AT A TIME!


I NEED TO FIGHT STRONG OPPONENTS!!




FSH


...


JOIN ME IN A DRINK?
WHO
A MONK DRINKING SAKÉ!?
HEY!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT!?
HMPH!




GION
TŌJI...






...IS
QUITE
FOR-
MIDABLE.




HE SAYS... HE WILL COME BACK HERE EVERY DAY UNTIL A MAN NAMED MIYAMOTO MUSASHI APPEARS.
HE APPEARS TO BE FROM KYOTO.
HE HAS A REFINED AIR ABOUT HIM.




INSHUN, YOU MUST HAVE HEARD THE RUMORS ABOUT THAT MAN WHO SINGLE-HANDEDLY CHALLENGED THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
HE PROVED TO BE AN EQUAL MATCH AGAINST THE SECOND SON, YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ.


YAHHH!


MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!


THEY SAY...
...THAT MAN'S NAME WAS...

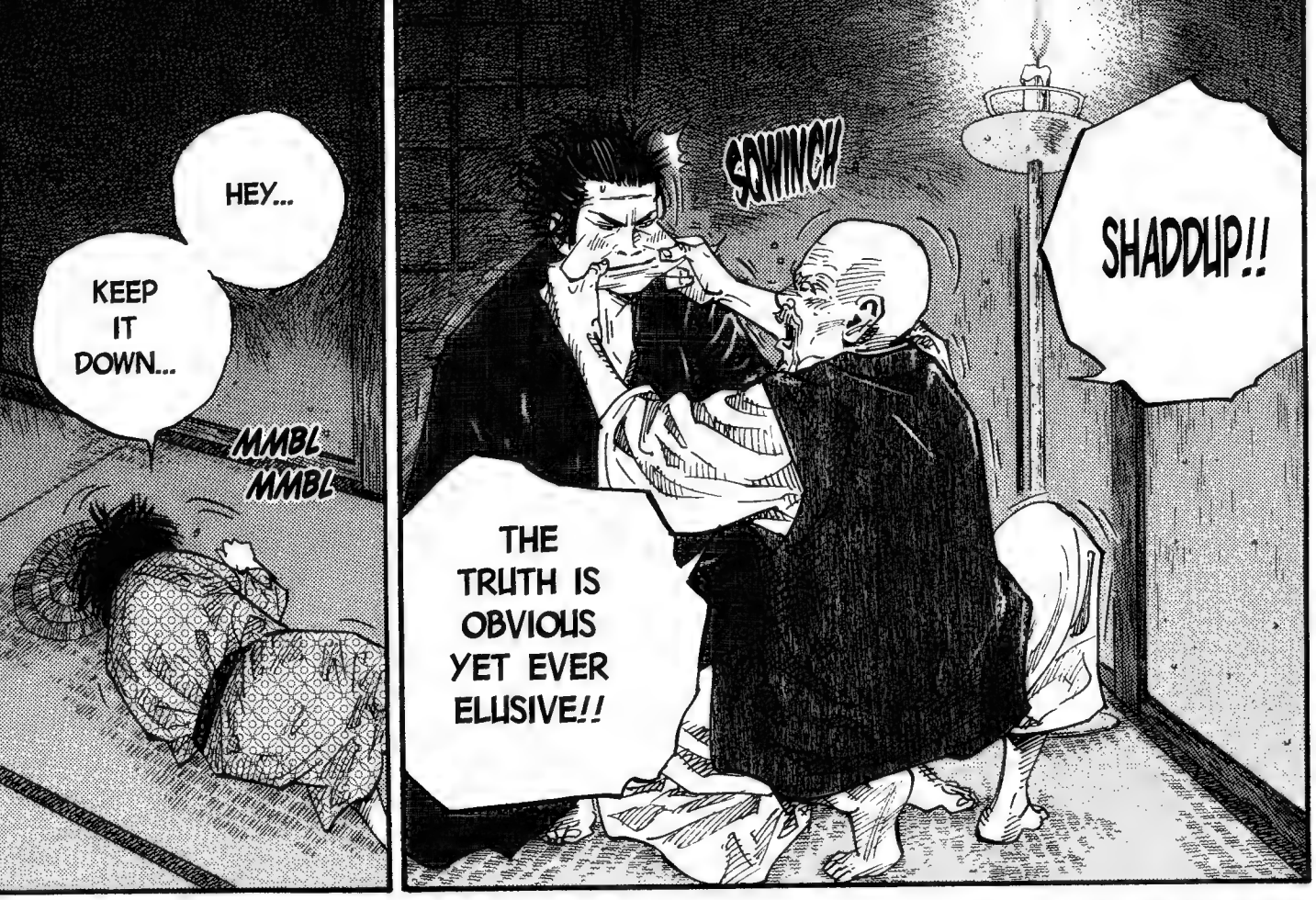


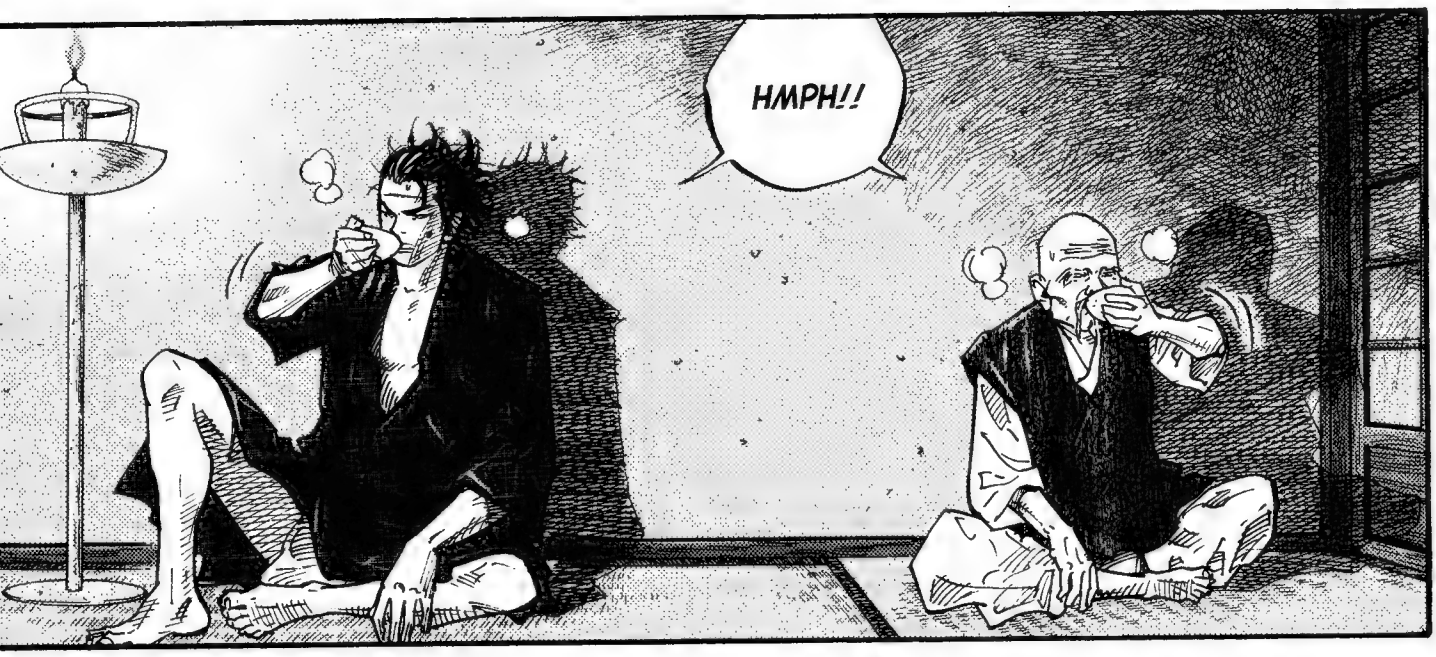



WHEN I WAS A KID...
YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ PAID US A VISIT FROM KYOTO...
HIS OLDEST SON, SEIJŪRŌ WAS WITH HIM.
SO THEN, GION TŌJI...
...IS AN ASSASSIN FOR THE YOSHIOKA!?
YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ!
IT WAS THEN THAT I REAL-IZED...
...THAT I WASN'T THE ONLY PRODIGY AROUND!

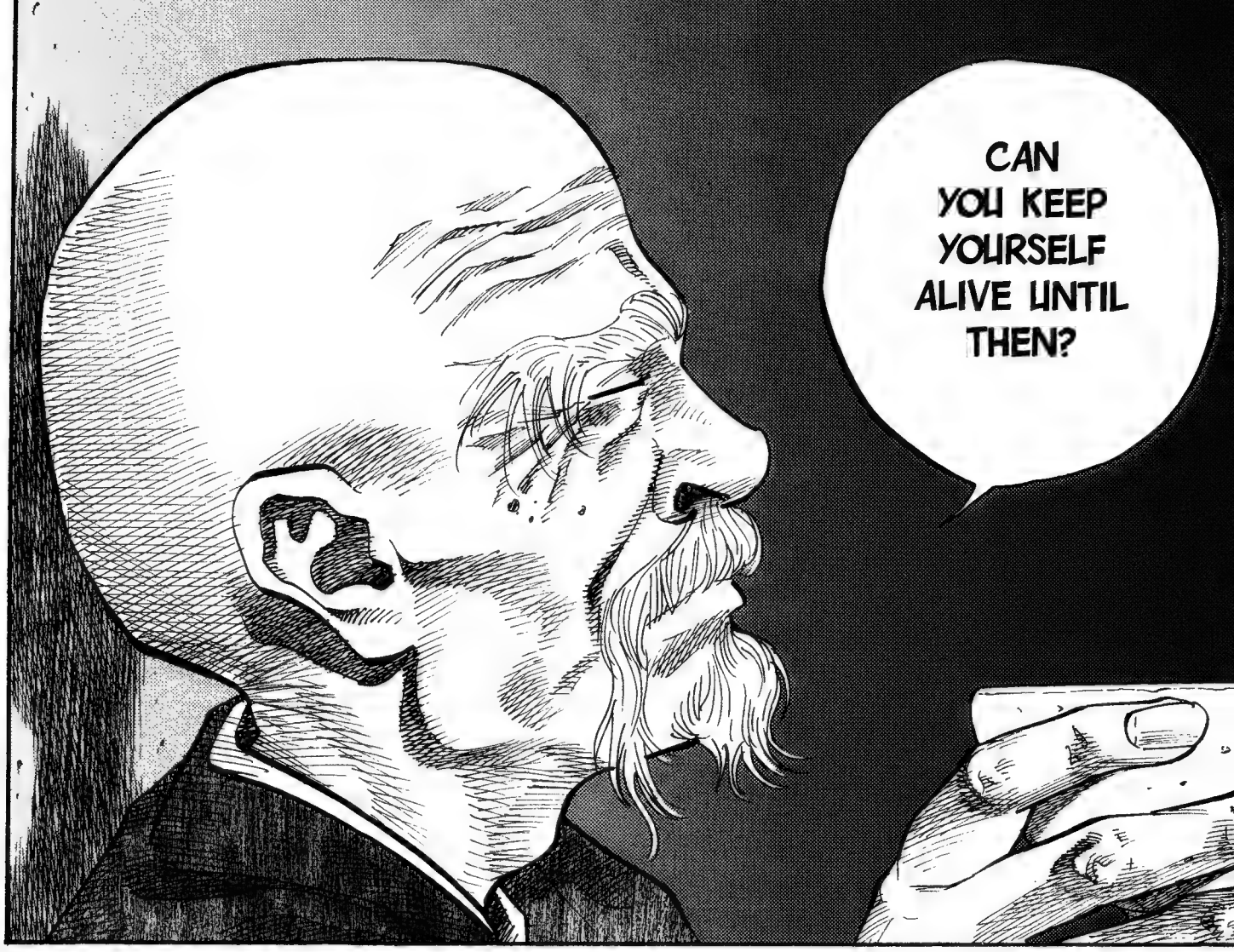

SO IT'S THE MAN THAT HAD YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ IN A DEADLOCK...
...AND AN ASSASSIN FROM THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL!!
I CAN'T WAIT TO FIGHT THEM!!

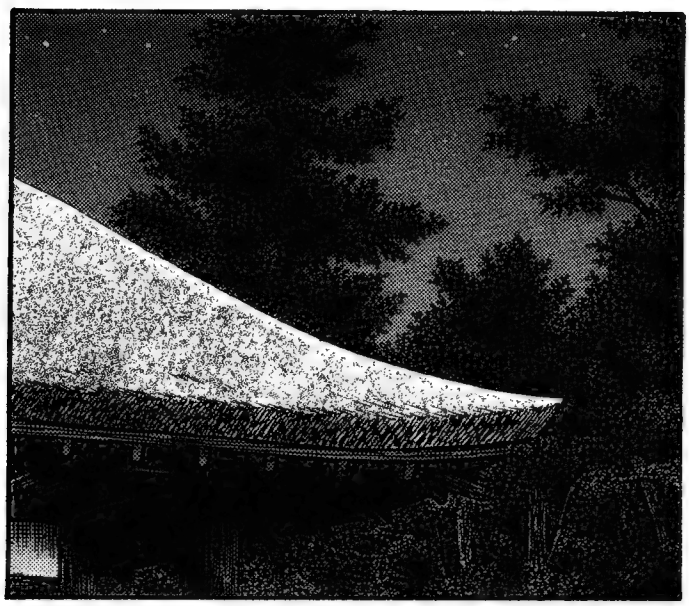

AH, C'MON...
ZZZ
SHNORR
"YOU CAN ONLY PERCEIVE WHAT TRUE STRENGTH IS...
"...WHEN YOU YOURSELF BECOME TRULY STRONG."
HRMPH!
SKRINCH
WHY DO YOU GOTTA BE SO HAUGHTY ABOUT IT?
ANYBODY COULD COME UP WITH THAT LINE!!

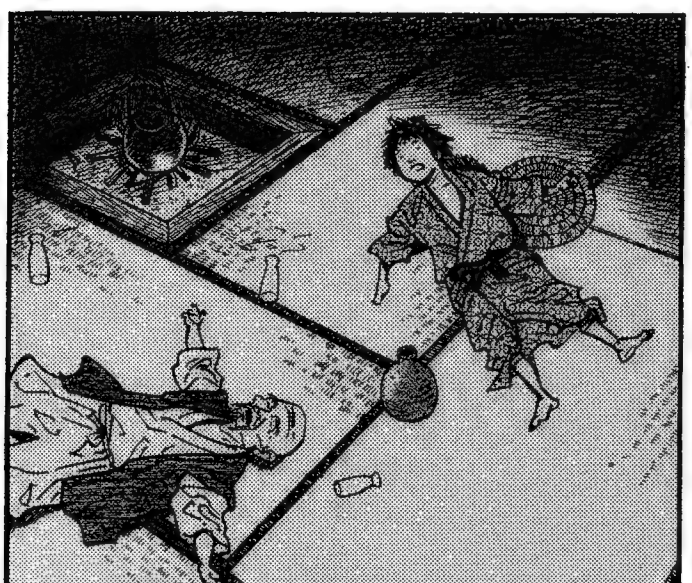

HEY...
KEEP IT DOWN...
MMBL MMBL
SQWINCH
SHADDUP!!
THE TRUTH IS OBVIOUS YET EVER ELUSIVE!!


HMPH!!


...
AND...
...LET'S SAY THERE *WILL* COME A TIME WHEN YOU FINALLY UNDER-STAND TRUE STRENGTH...


CAN YOU KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE UNTIL THEN?






HUH!


...
FSH
FIP
FWICH


I'M STRONG!!
I WON'T DIE!!


...
RIGHT!!


...

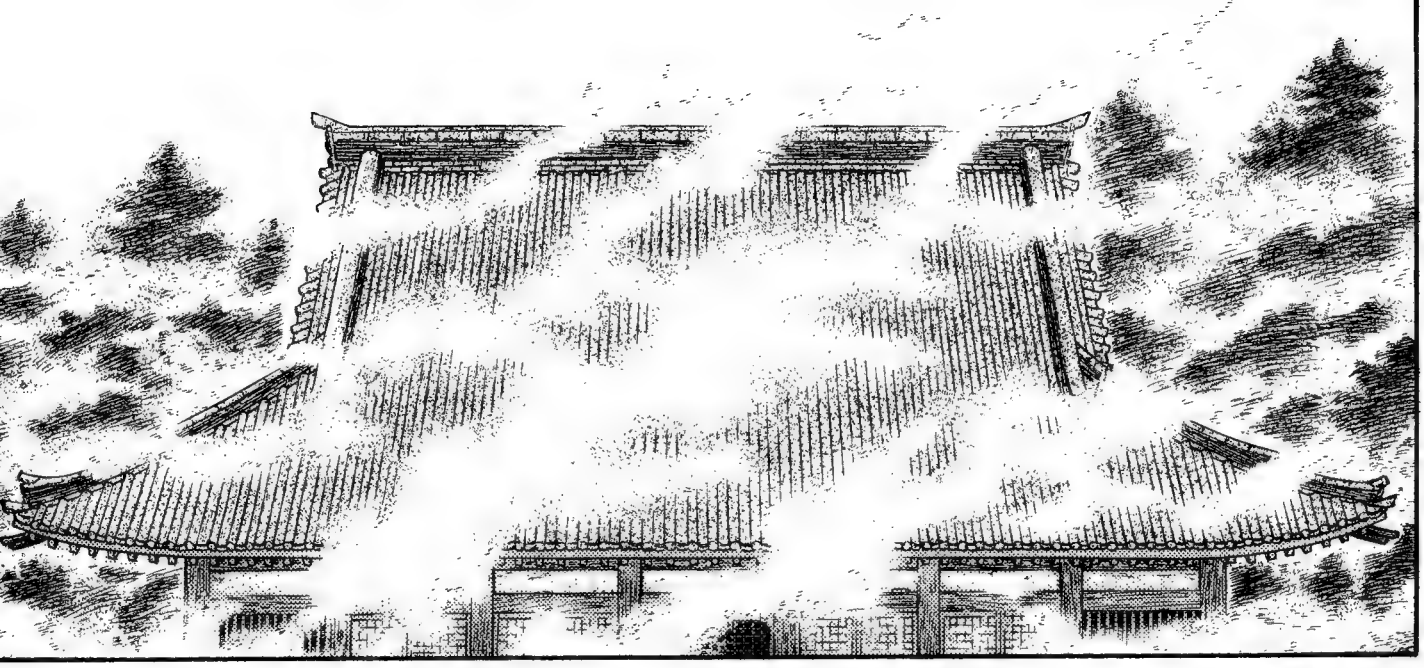

URGH!
WHOP


HA HA

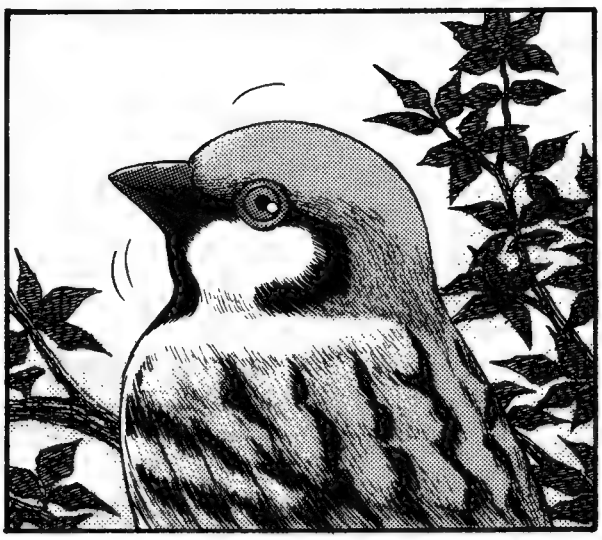

THE SPEAR HAS GREAT REACH.

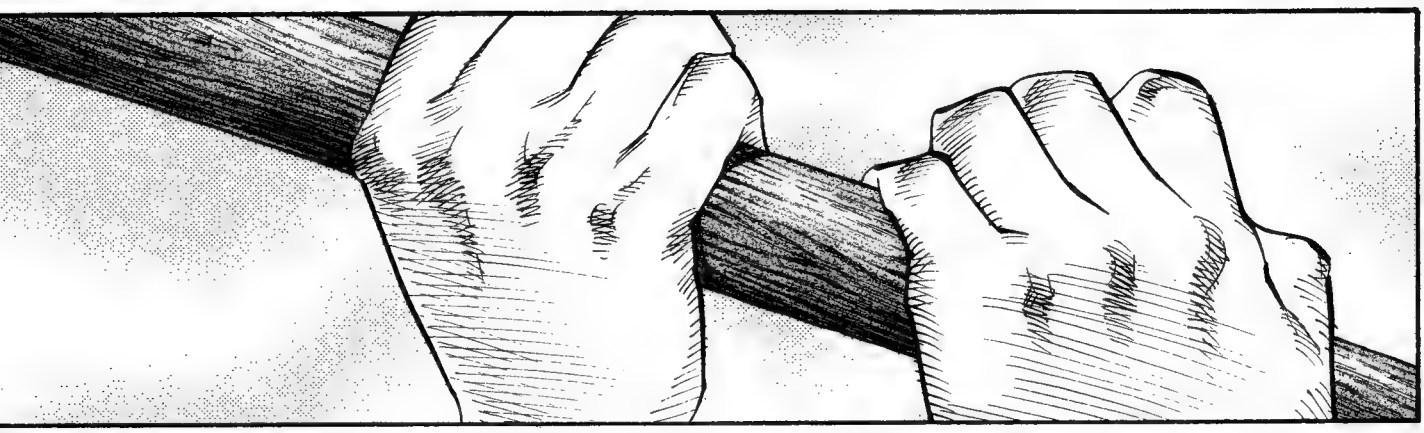

Vagabond

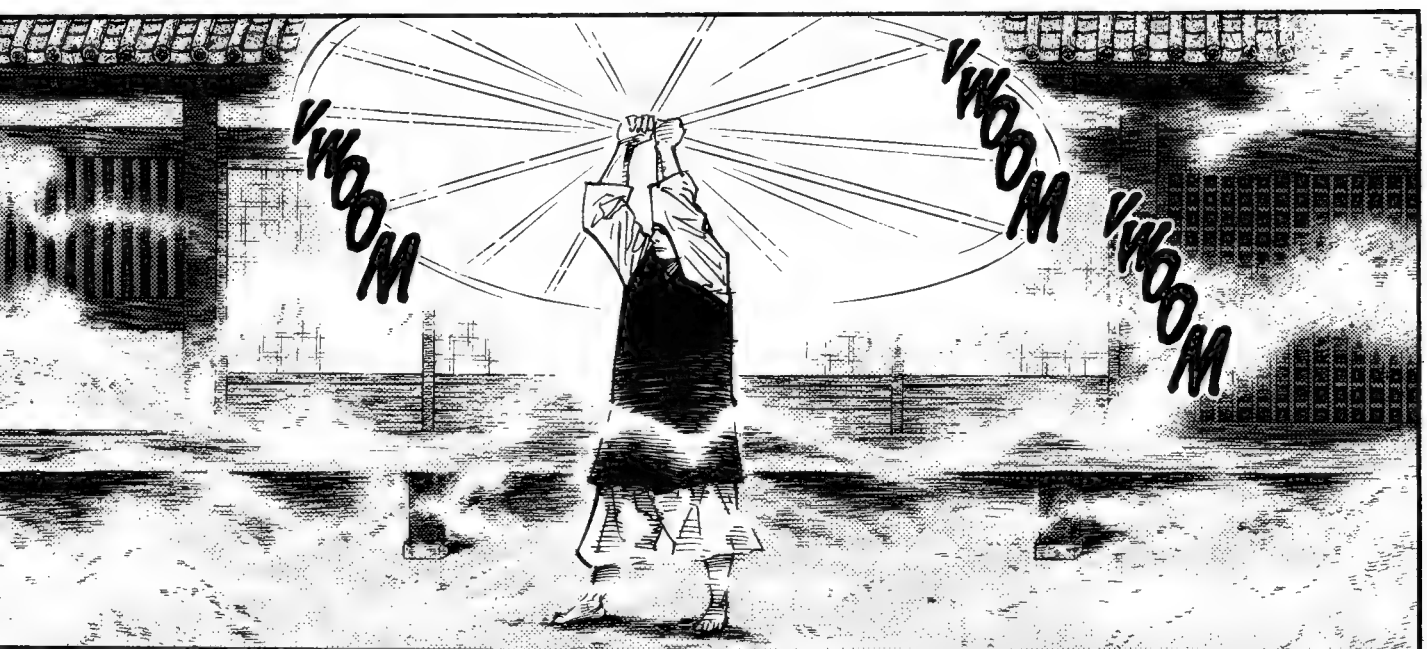

(HRMPH?)
にゃむ？




FWAP
FWAP






VWOOM
VWOOM
VWOOM

YAHH!

HAHH!

YAHH!

#40|Agon

HUH!?

!

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

FWOOSH

HAHH!


THE ENEMY...!!
FSH
KRICH
KRICH
GION TOJI...?
HMPH. THE SPEAR TECHNIQUE OF HOZOIN!.. IMPRESSIVE!
NO...
KRICH
KRICH
KRICH
THIS BLOODTHIRST I SENSE...
IT'S MORE RECKLESS AND PRIMITIVE...
KRICH
KRICH
KRICH

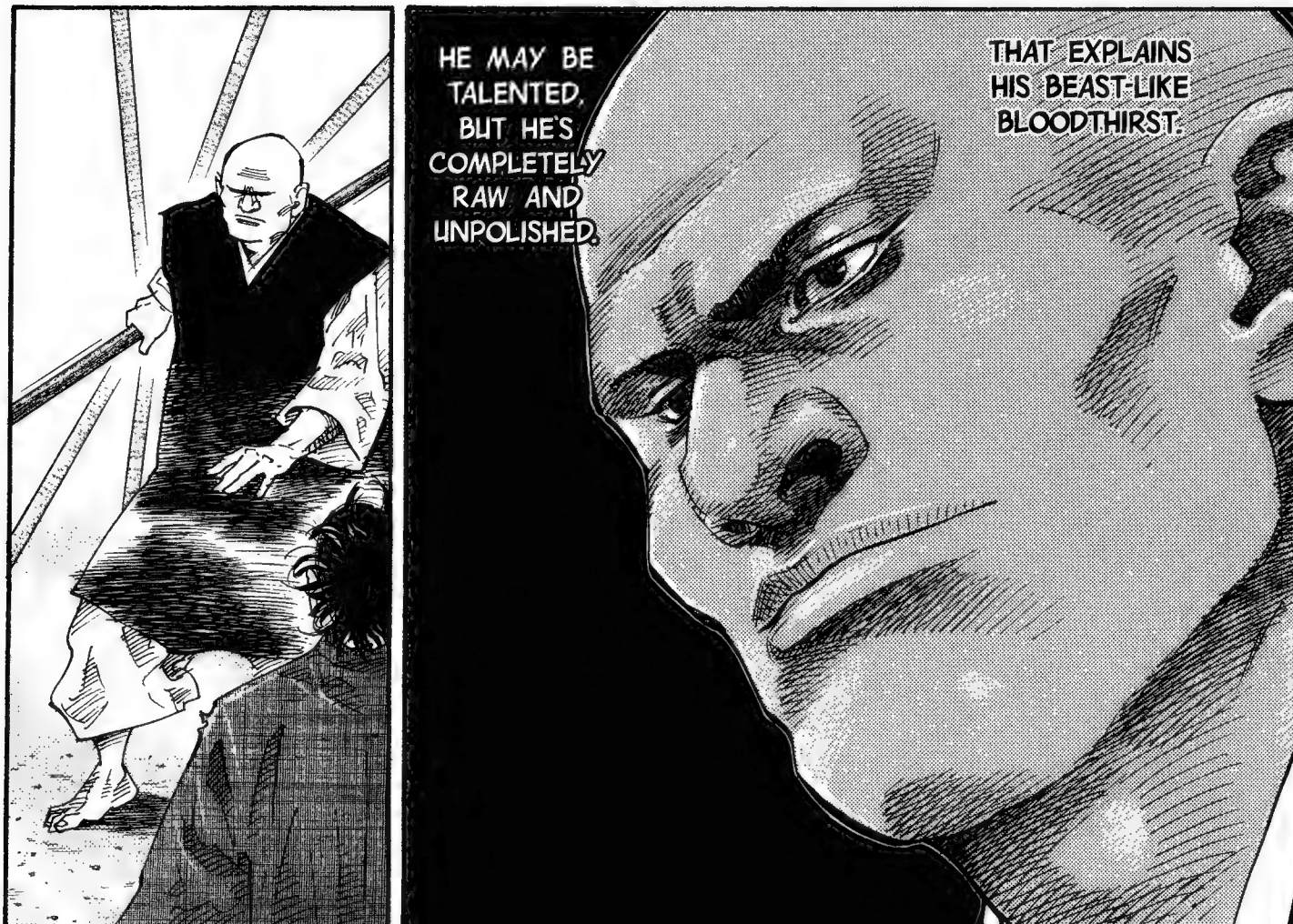

THOK
HE'S ALREADY ATTACKING ME!


WOOSH
YAHH!


!!
THWAK
TWITCH
IN-
CREDIBLE
...
TWITCH
TWITCH
...BY
AGON OF
HŌZŌIN.
YOU WILL
HAVE THE
PRIVILEGE
OF BEING
DEFEATED...
HE'S SO
STRONG...
AND
HE'S
NOT
IN'EI!?
HE'S
NOT
IN'EI...?


I'M MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!
!!
GASP!


HE'S SO YOUNG...!
...
I SEE...


HE MAY BE TALENTED, BUT HE'S COMPLETELY RAW AND UNPOLISHED.
THAT EXPLAINS HIS BEAST-LIKE BLOODTHIRST.


ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE ...
...THE SPEAR TECHNIQUE OF HŌZŌIN TEMPLE.
HMPH!
"CAN YOU KEEP YOUR-SELF ALIVE?"
"CAN YOU KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE UNTIL THEN?"
ALL RIGHT, THEN...
LET'S SEE WHAT YOU GOT...


YAHH!
THWOK


FWOOM


NNGH!


...!!
WHUD


!!
FWSH!
HAHH!
ARGH!
WHUD
!!


WOOSH
!!


IT'S LIKE HE'S LUNGING A LOG AT ME!
SUCH OVER-WHELMING FORCE!
HUF
HUF


I'VE GOT TO WIN.
I'LL WIN.
HUF
HUF


HAVE TO GET INSIDE...
HUF
"RIGHT!!"
"THE SPEAR HAS GREAT REACH."


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF


...THEN I'LL WIN!!
!!
THRAK
HMPH.

YAHHH!!
WOOSH

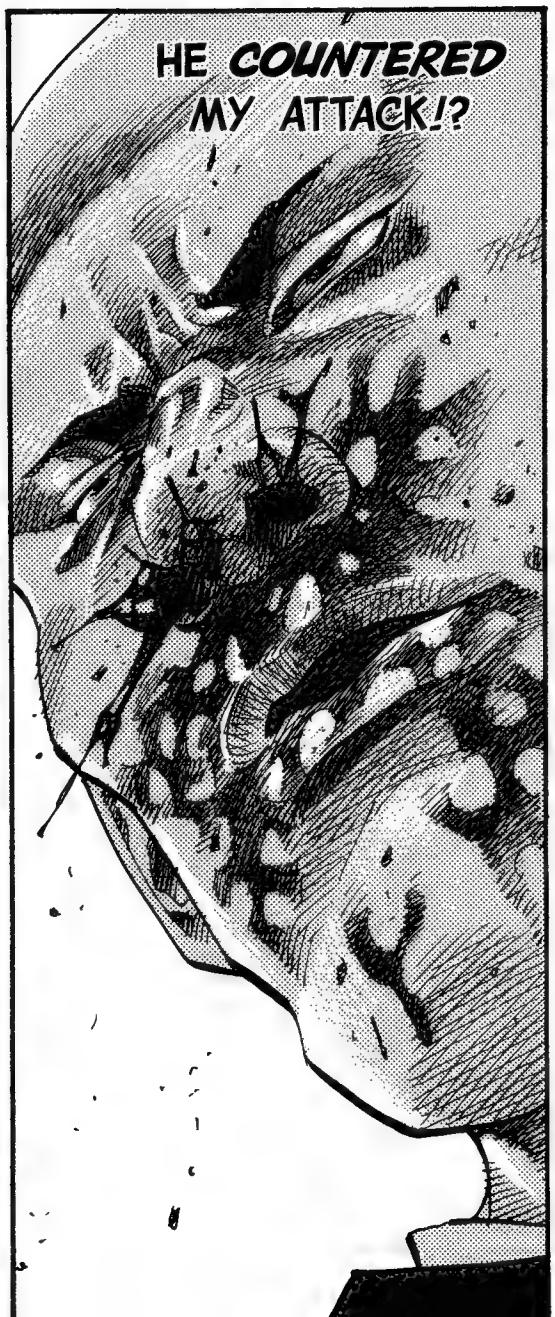



ALL RIGHT...
NOW IT'S MY TURN.
GRRD






HMPH.

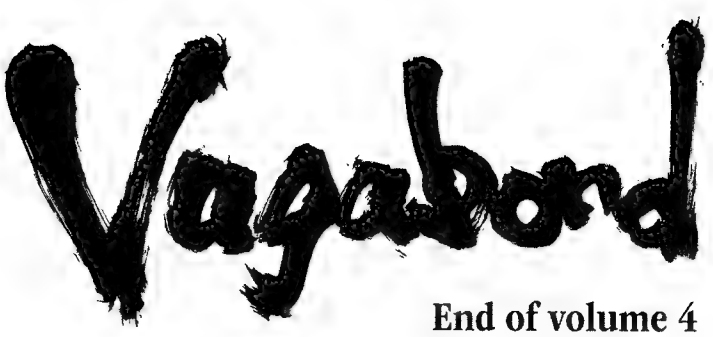

HE COUNTERED MY ATTACK!?


!!
KRAK




HUF
HUF
HUF
I'LL HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR THAT IN THE FUTURE, MYSELF...
HE BECAME CARELESS WITH HIS ATTACKS AFTER I LOST MY WEAPON...
HUF
HUF
HUF
I WON...
FWUMP
KLAP KLAP KLAP
!


VERY NICE.
KLAP
K-LAP
KLAP



End of volume 4


SCANNED BY :
. DEMETTER
. SUPERJOE
EDITED BY :
. PHANTOM GREYFIRE
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I WON...


SHUF
SHUF




KLAP
KLAP
KLAP



#41 The Assassin


YOU'RE FROM THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
...
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE...?


MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
I'M HERE TO CUT YOU DOWN.


I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE FIRE.
AND I DON'T KNOW WHO STARTED IT.
I SHOWED UP AT YOUR DOJO BY MYSELF.


WHY?

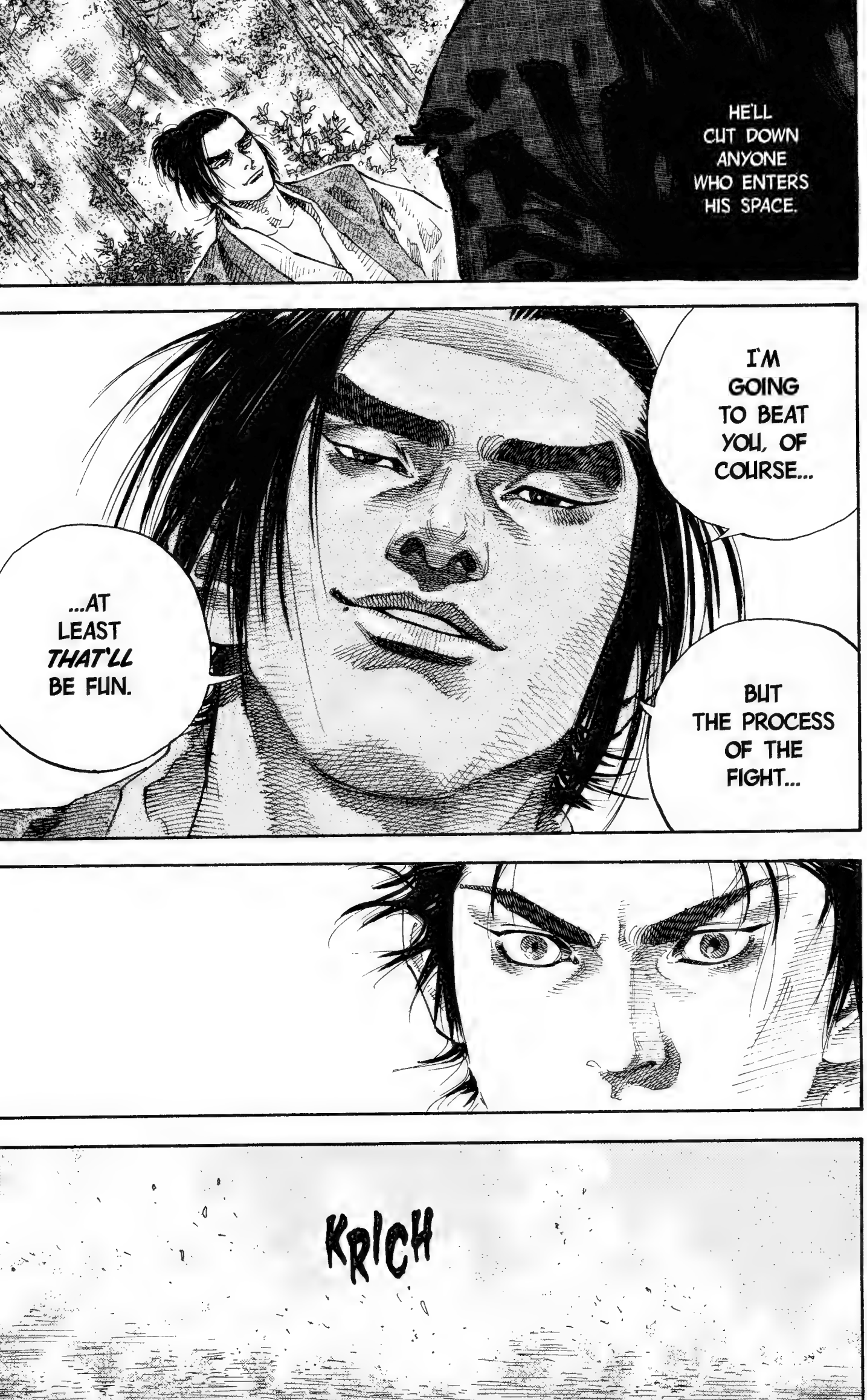

...


BUT IF YOU INSIST...
...I'LL TAKE YOU ON...


I KNEW IT...
HA HA HA...
HA HA HA...
YOU'RE JUST LIKE ME.
YOU ONLY KNOW HOW TO SPEAK THROUGH YOUR SWORD.
ZWING


BUT...
...I JUST THOUGHT THAT A BOUT WITH YOU MIGHT PROVE TO BE INTERESTING.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO BURNT THE SCHOOL DOWN.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT.


...BUT HE'LL BITE IF I'M NOT CAREFUL...
HIS STANCE IS TOTALLY LOOSE...
THIS GUY...
...


HE'LL CUT DOWN ANYONE WHO ENTERS HIS SPACE.
I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU, OF COURSE...
...AT LEAST *THAT'LL* BE FUN.
BUT THE PROCESS OF THE FIGHT...
KRICH


HM?
FSH
WHAT A GRACELESS THRUST!
FWOOSH


THRAK






HMPH...!!
NICE.
YOU LET GO IN MID-SWING.
IMPOSSIBLE FOR MOST PEOPLE.
HP
YAWN ...


HAH!!
YOUR OVER-WHELMING POWER AND VIGOR...
...THAT'S ENOUGH TO BEAT MOST PEOPLE...
FWOOM
KLAKK








TMP
TMP
TMP
!!
HEY!!
FWOOSH


THOK
THOK


!!
!!
Tp
AGON!!
HUF...
URGH...
INSHUN...
GOOD!!
PHEW
YOU'RE ALIVE!!

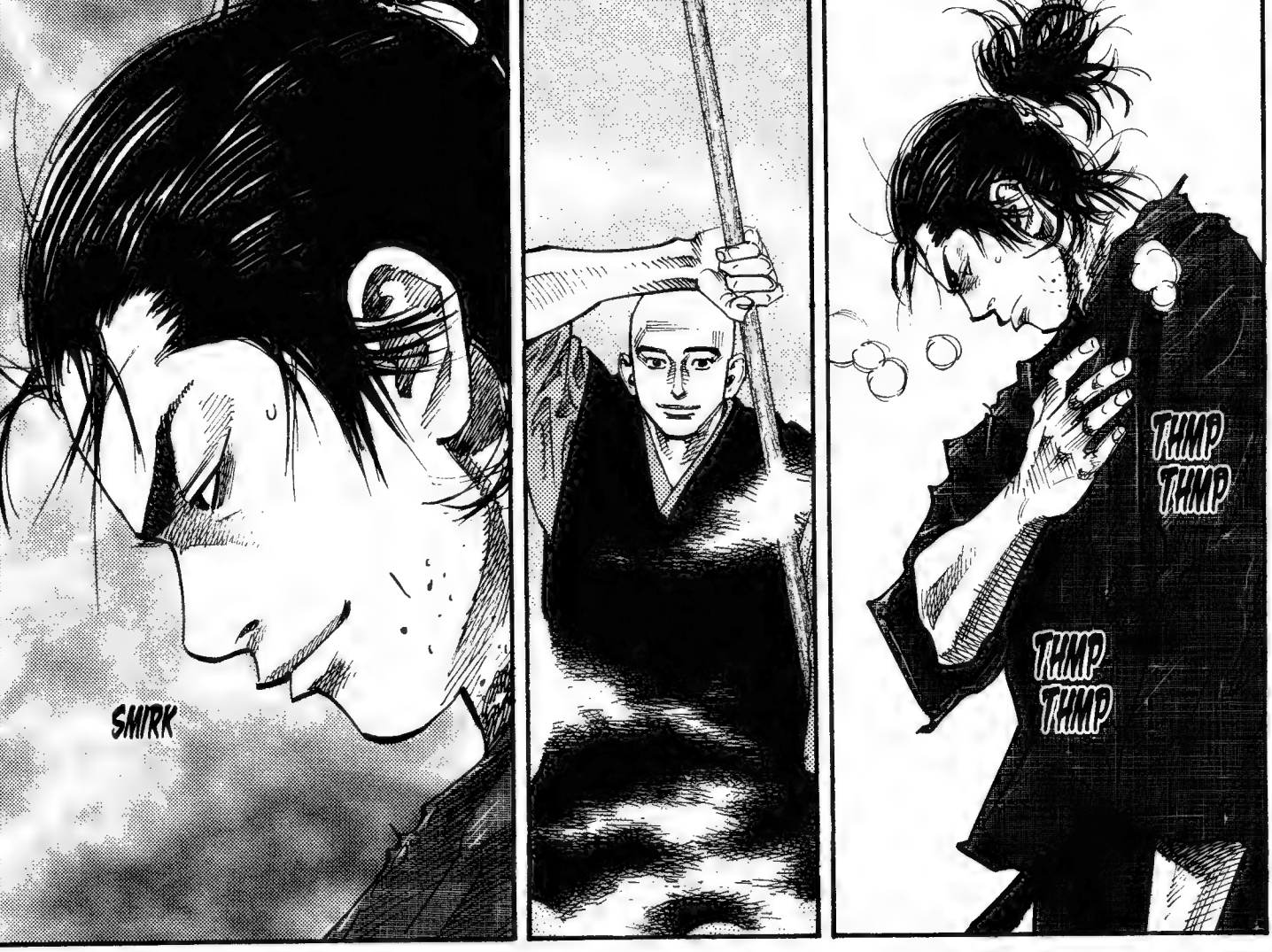


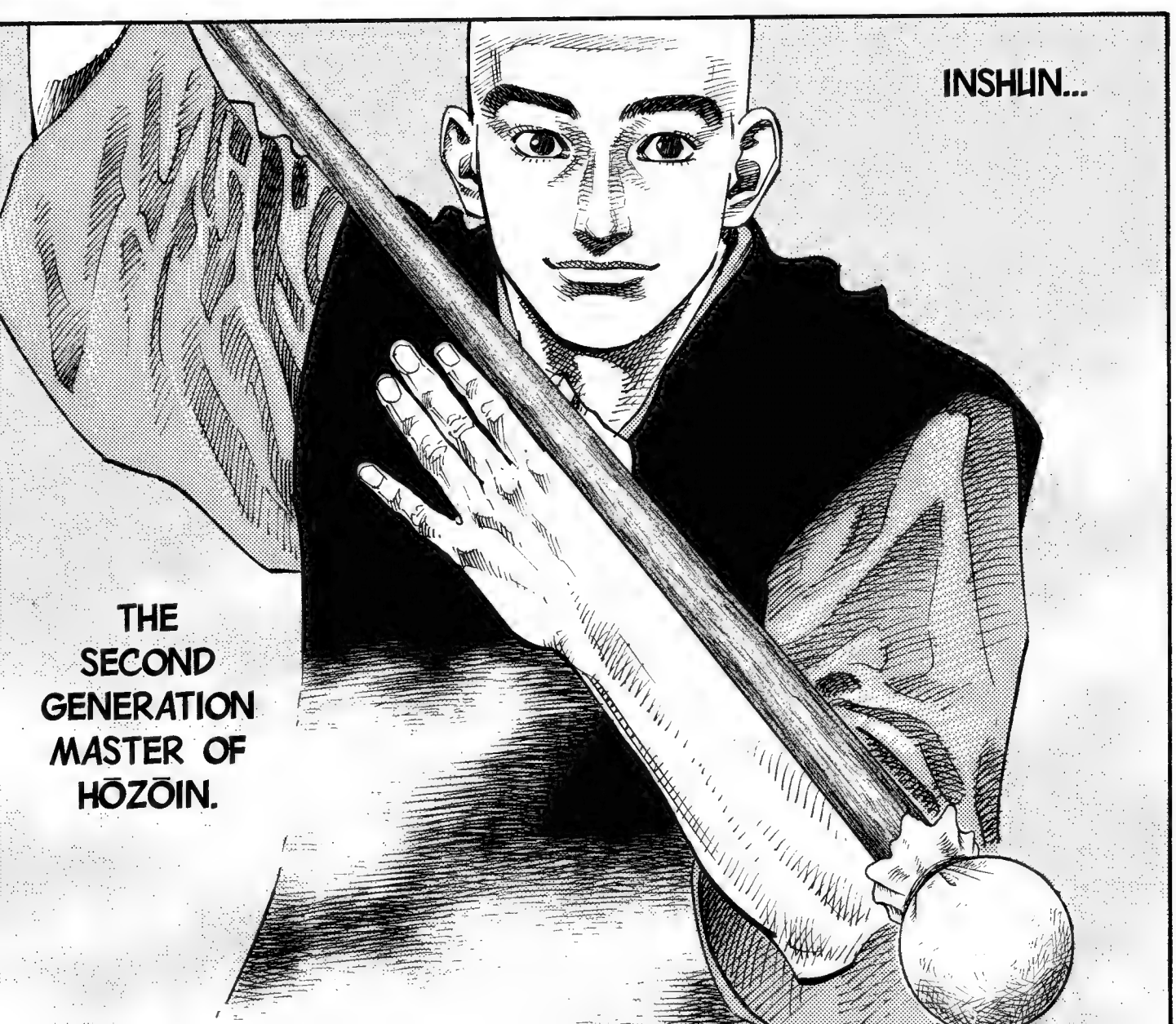
FWOOSH


I AM INSHUN, THE SECOND-GENERATION MASTER OF THE HŌZŌIN SPEAR TECHNIQUE.
LET ME TAKE YOU ON!


Vagabond


(ZING!)
スラリ

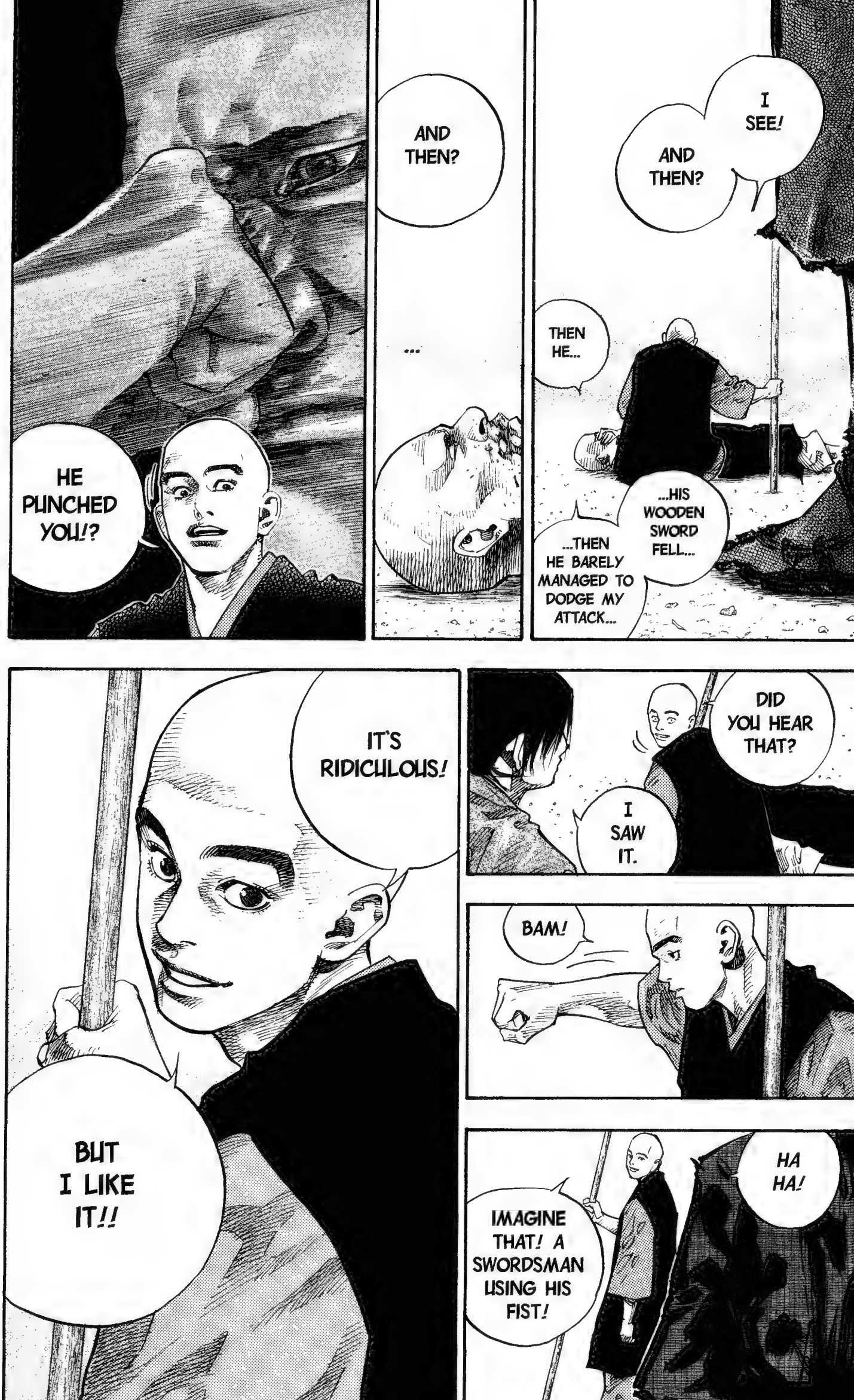

SMIRK
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP

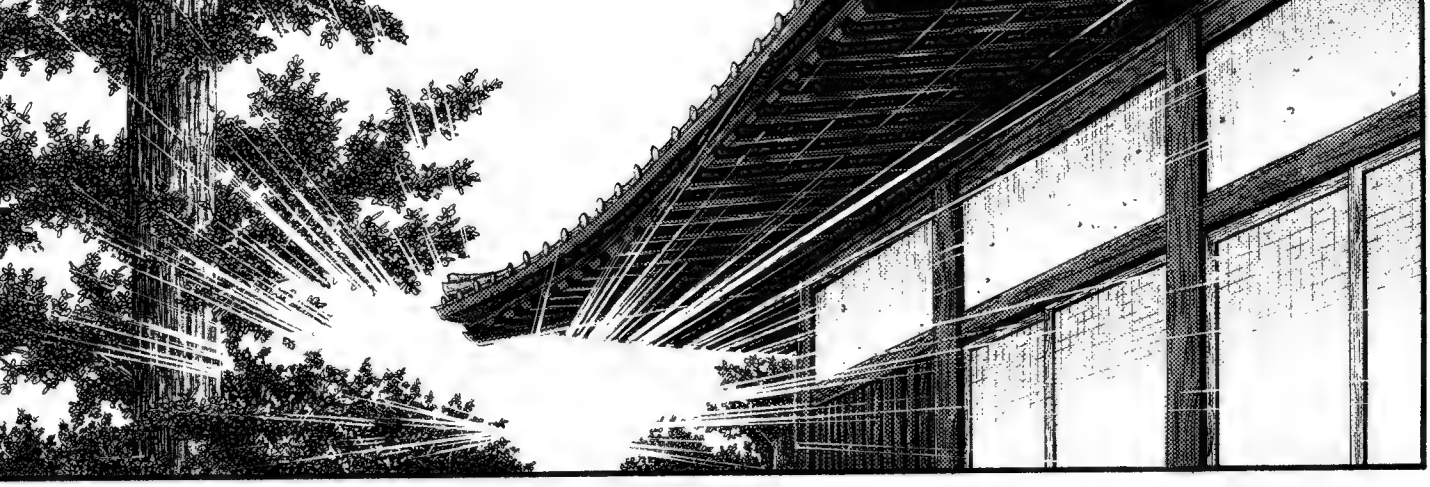

INSHUN...
THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN.

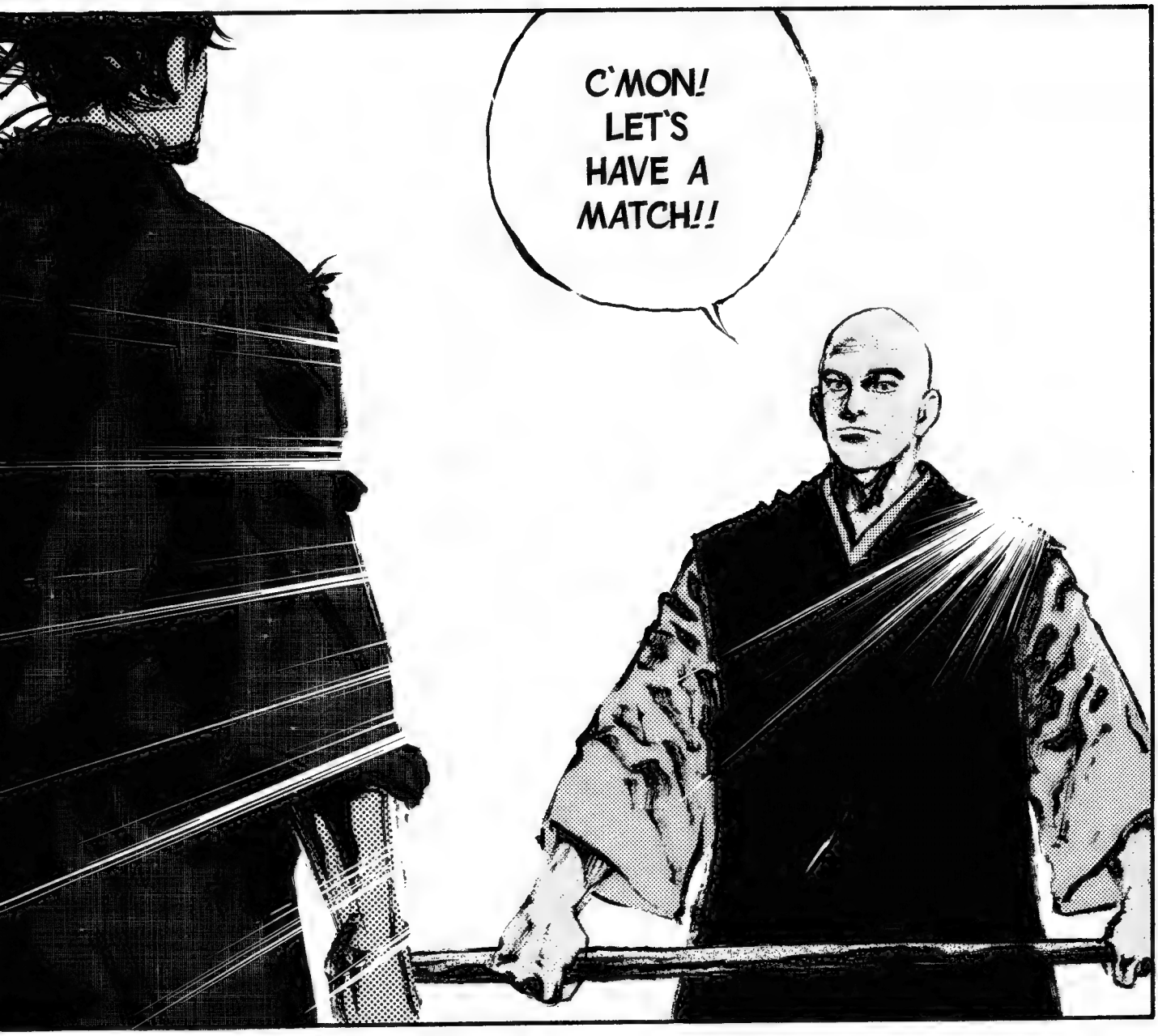

THIS GUY IS STRONG!!
#42 Howl


SO, INSHUN...
...WHICH OF US WILL YOU FIGHT?
REPUTATION, HUH...?
INSHUN...
I'M GION TŌJI.
YOUR REPUTATION IS WELL-KNOWN, EVEN IN KYOTO.
ME...
OR WILL YOU FIGHT US BOTH AT THE SAME TIME?
...OR THAT NOVICE?

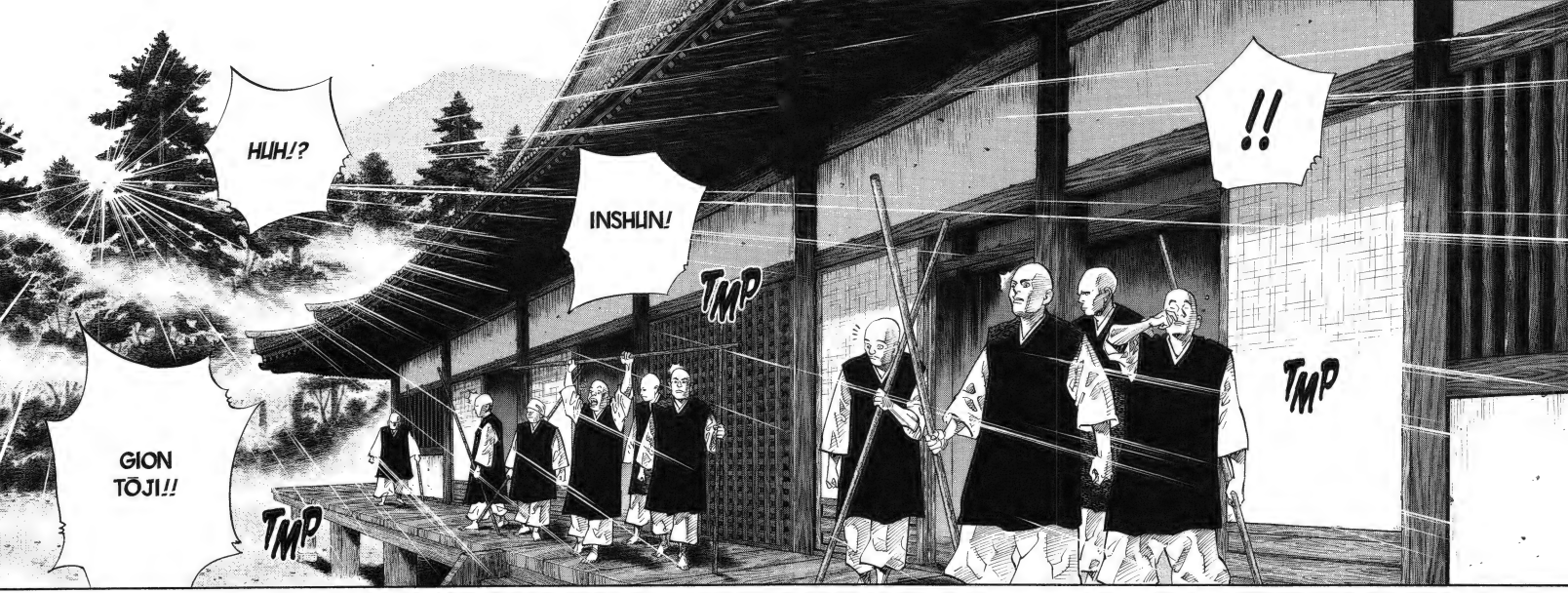

NOT THAT I WANT TO TEAM UP WITH HIM OR ANYTHING...
ME NEITHER.
HM...
KOFF...
THE SHAGGY ONE...
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.
AGON!!
WHO BEAT YOU?
URGH...
HOW'D HE DO IT?


HE PUNCHED YOU!?
AND THEN?
...
I SEE!
AND THEN?
THEN HE...
...HIS WOODEN SWORD FELL...
...THEN HE BARELY MANAGED TO DODGE MY ATTACK...
DID YOU HEAR THAT?
I SAW IT.
BAM!
IT'S RIDICULOUS!
BUT I LIKE IT!!
HA HA!
IMAGINE THAT! A SWORDSMAN USING HIS FIST!

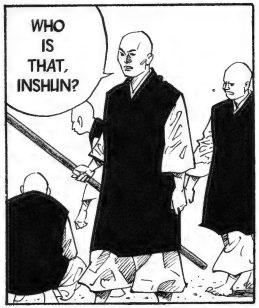



C'MON! LET'S HAVE A MATCH!!

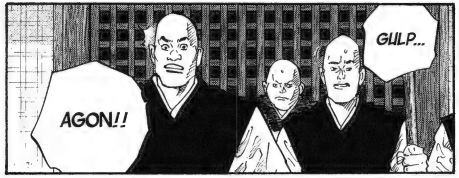

ME, HUH?

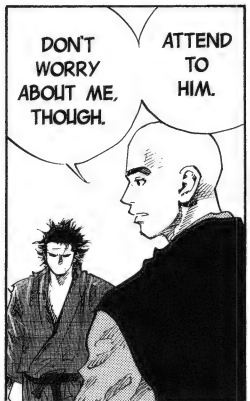

HUH!?
INSHUN!
TMP
!!
GION TOJI!!
TMP
TMP

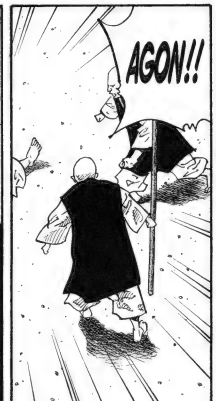

HIS NAME IS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!
A WILD BEAST...


WHO IS THAT, INSHUN?


I HAVE A QUESTION...

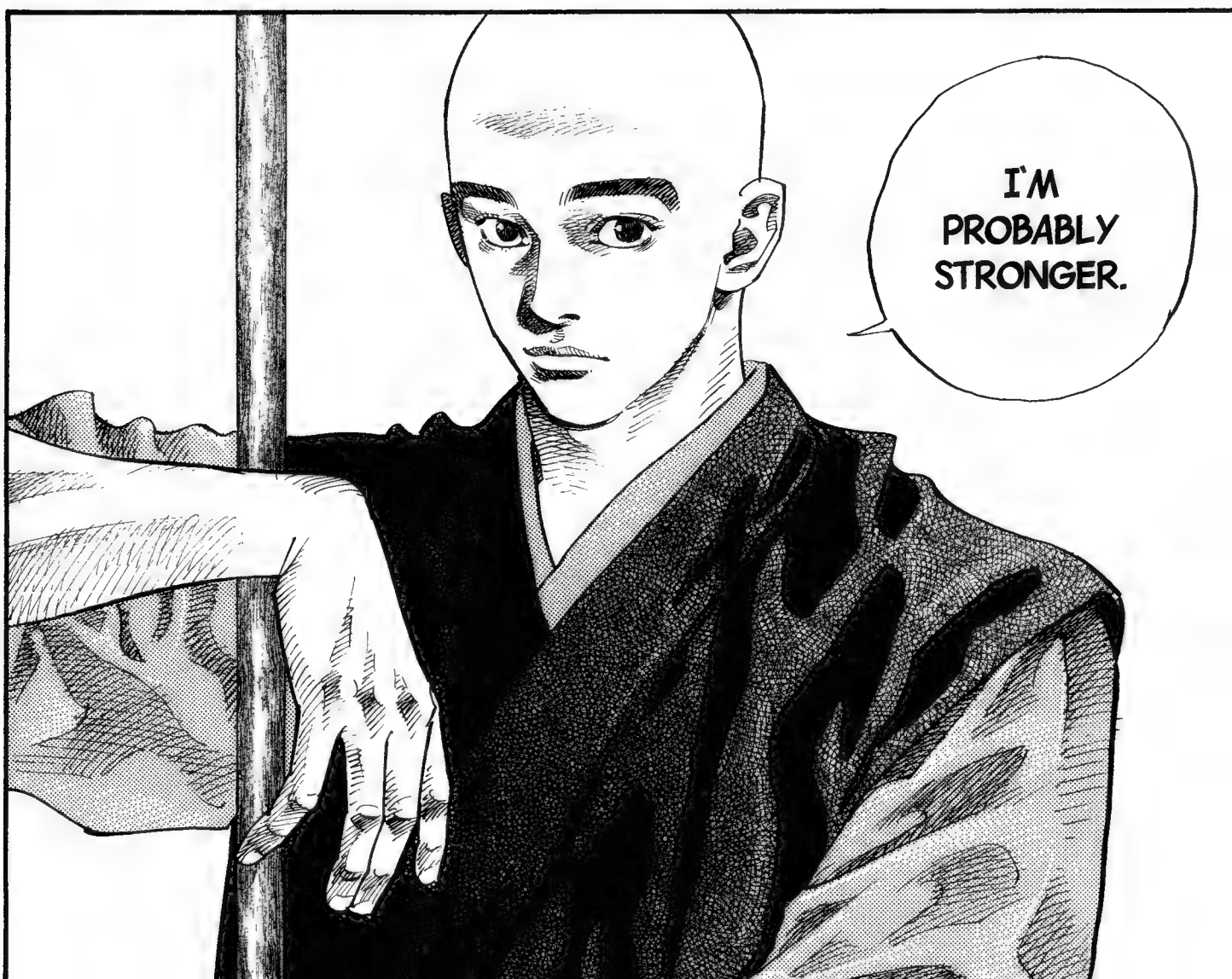

AGON!!
GULP...

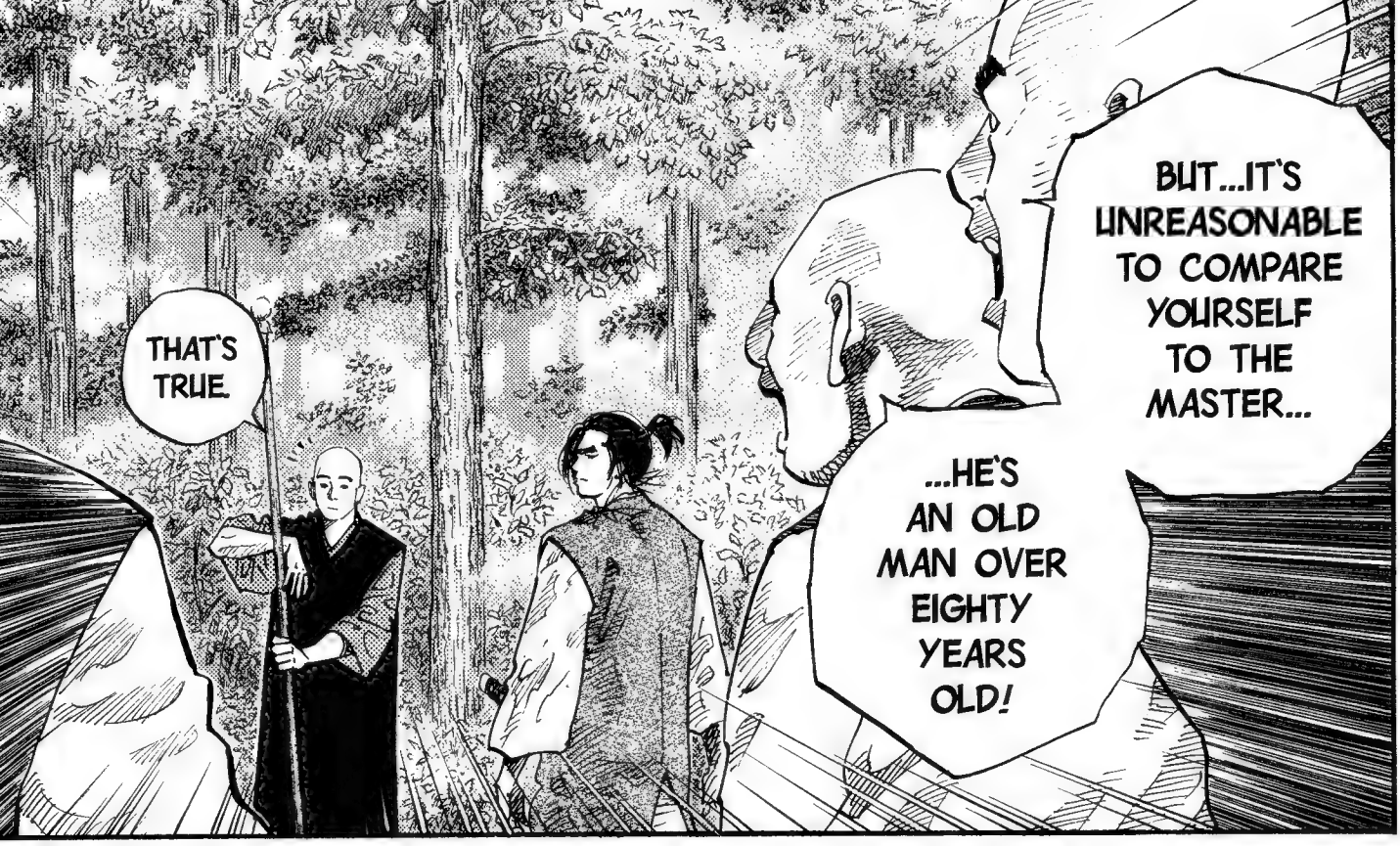

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, THOUGH.
ATTEND TO HIM.


AGON!!

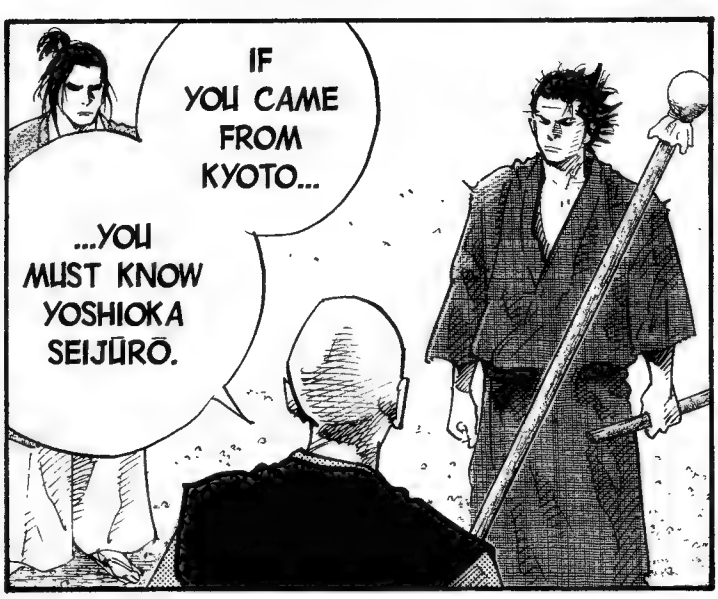

NICE TO SEE YOU GUYS AGAIN...


...DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE AS STRONG AS HŌZŌIN IN'EI?
IF YOU'RE THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER...


I'M PROBABLY STRONGER.


BUT...IT'S UNREASONABLE TO COMPARE YOURSELF TO THE MASTER...
...HE'S AN OLD MAN OVER EIGHTY YEARS OLD!
THAT'S TRUE.


HE'S THE ONLY ONE I CONSIDER MY EQUAL.


IF YOU CAME FROM KYOTO...
...YOU MUST KNOW YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ.


...!!

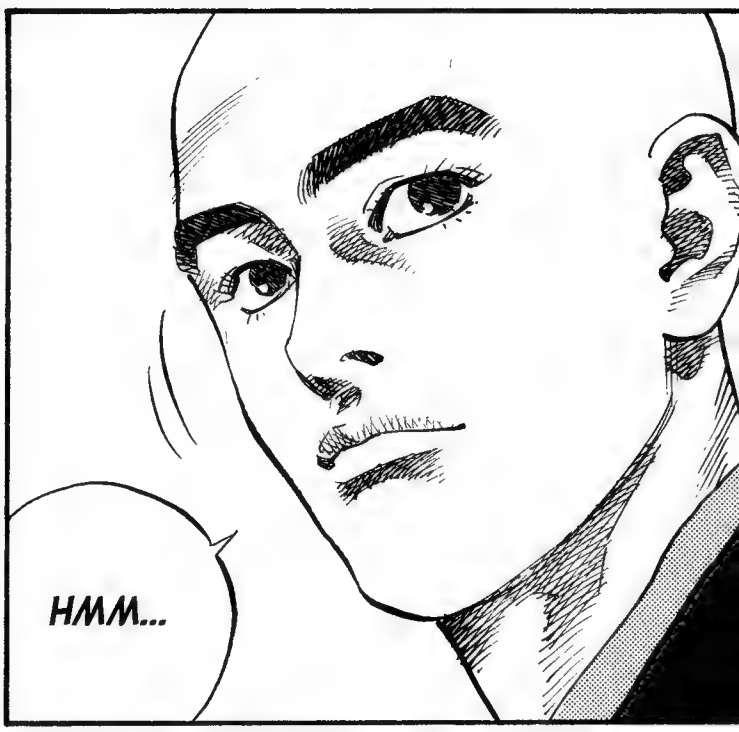

...


HA HA
HA HA!
HAH!


!!
!!
YOUR STYLE IS SO SIMILAR!
YOU MUST BE SEIJŪRŌ'S DISCIPLE!!
GION TŌJI...!!
WE'LL FIGHT LATER.
HE DODGED MY ATTACK...?


YOU TWO AREN'T GONNA FIGHT.

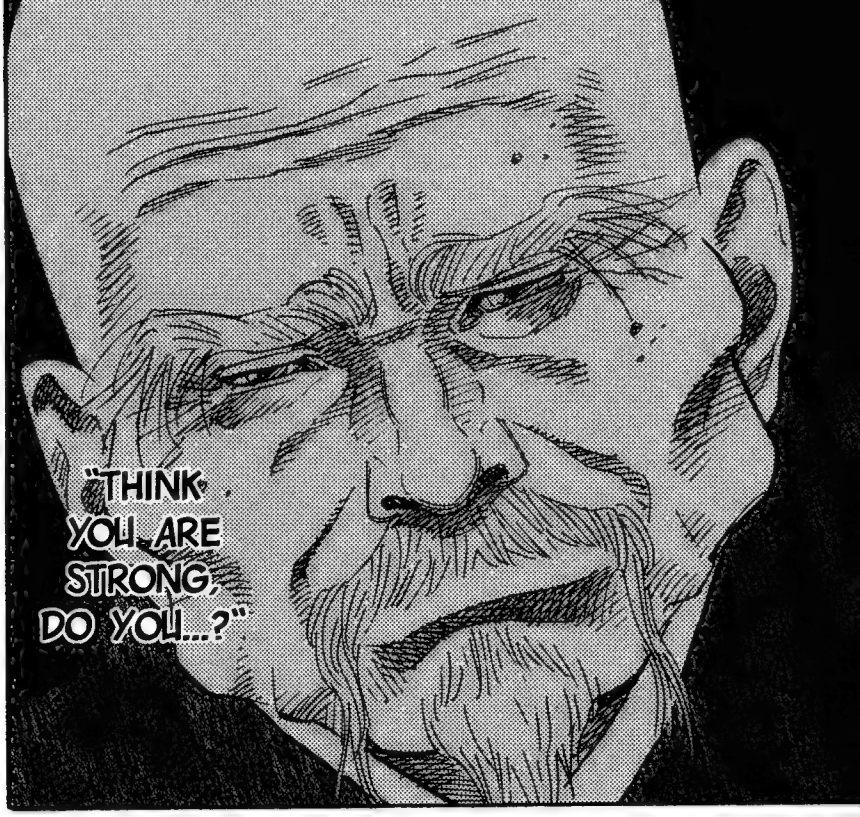


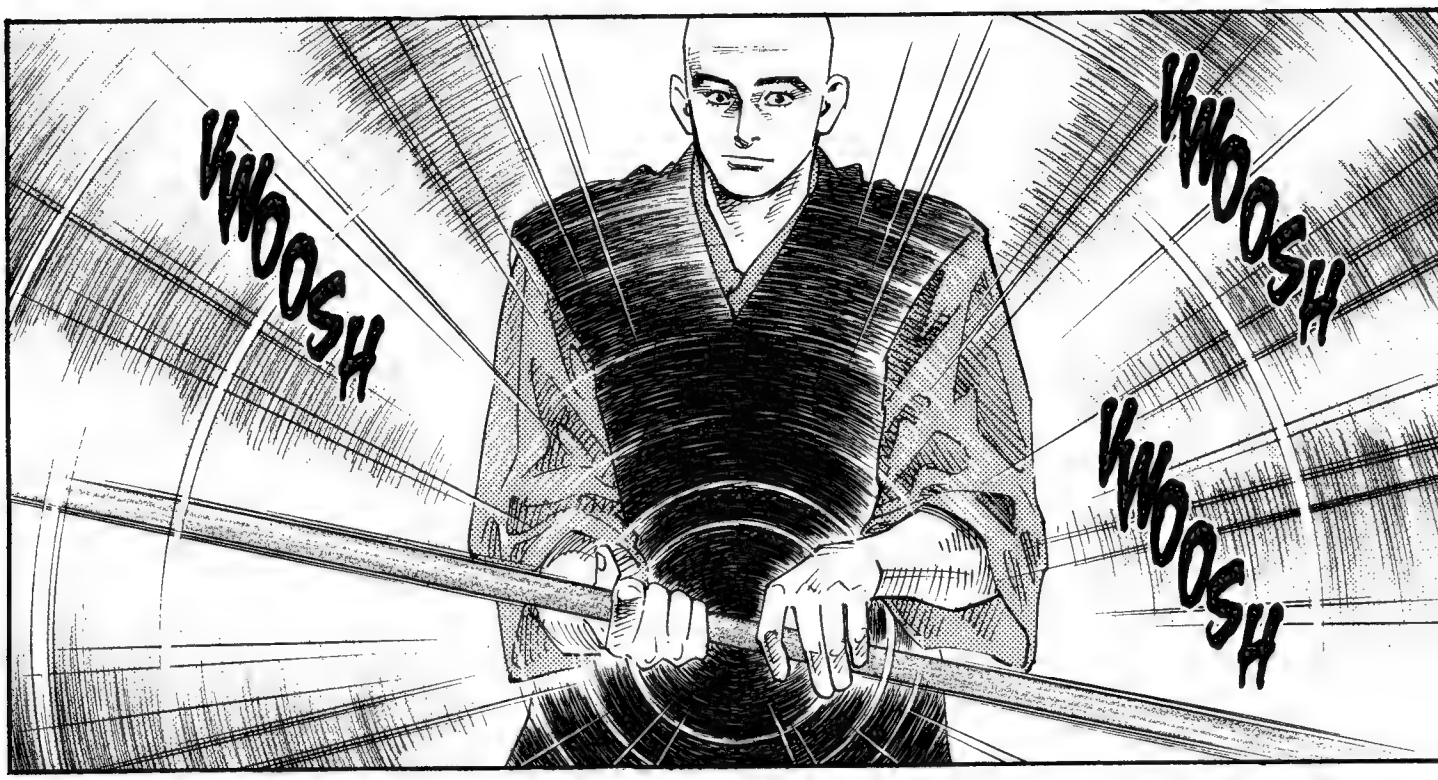

HMM...


BECAUSE I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU.


KRICH




"THINK YOU ARE STRONG, DO YOU...?"

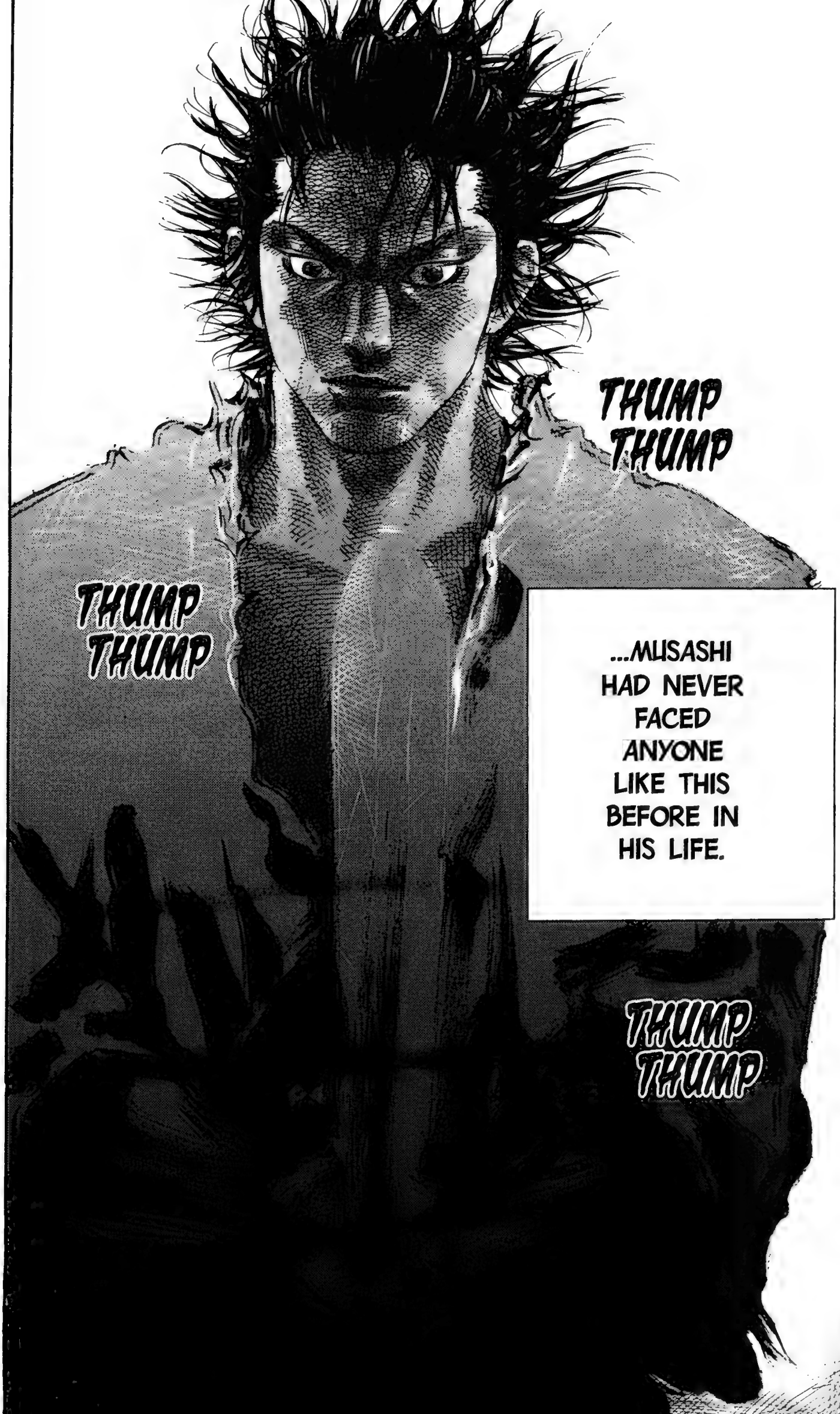

KWOOSH
KWOOSH
KWOOSH


"CAN YOU KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE UNTIL THEN?"

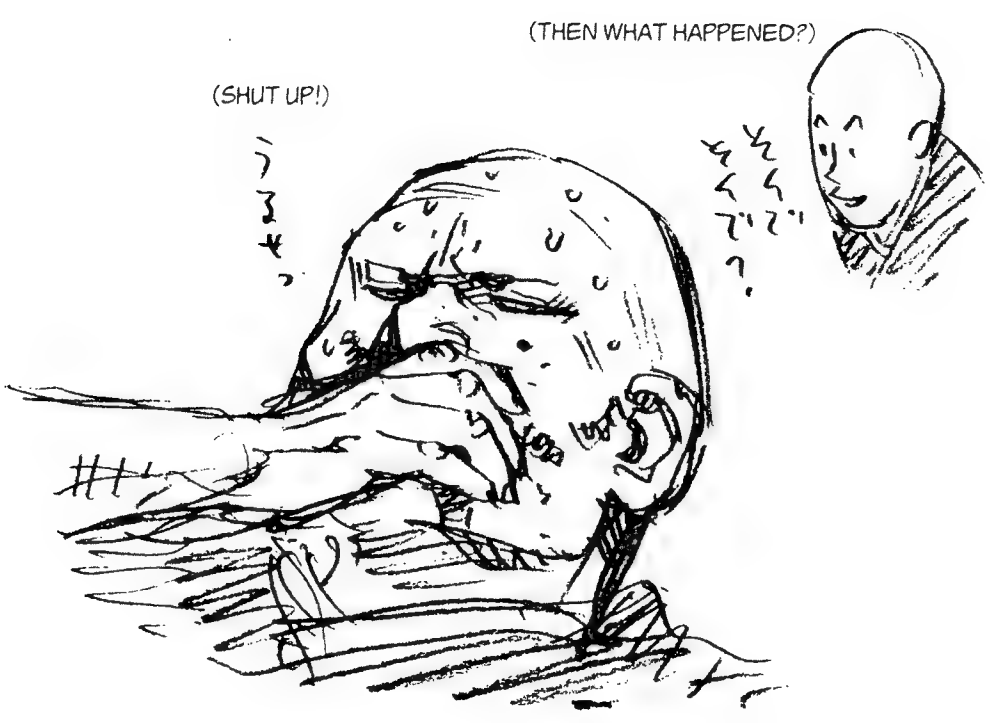





ERUPTING, FROM THE DEPTHS OF MUSASHI'S SUBCONSCIOUS, AN INVOLUNTARY HOWL...
YAHHHH!
...AS IF TO REJECT BEING OVERWHELMED BY THE GREAT POWER OF THE OPPONENT STANDING BEFORE HIM...


THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
...MUSASHI HAD NEVER FACED ANYONE LIKE THIS BEFORE IN HIS LIFE.
THUMP
THUMP

Vagabond


(THEN WHAT HAPPENED?)
(SHUT UP!)




THUMP
THUMP


THUMP


THUMP
THUMP




THUMP
THUMP



#43 Inshun's Spear




THWAK


WHAT'S WRONG?
WORSE YET, HE'S TOO RESTRAINED.


NO STYLE.






KWOOSH
KWOOSH
KWOOSH
FWIP


THWAK
YES!
NNGH...
YAH!!
THUD
!!


!!
FWOOSH
THRAK


FWOM
!!
...
HMM...?
WHUD
ARGH!!


HUF!!
KRICH
THWAK
TNK
FWIP
HUP!
YAH!!


THOK
HAH!!
!!


WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING...?



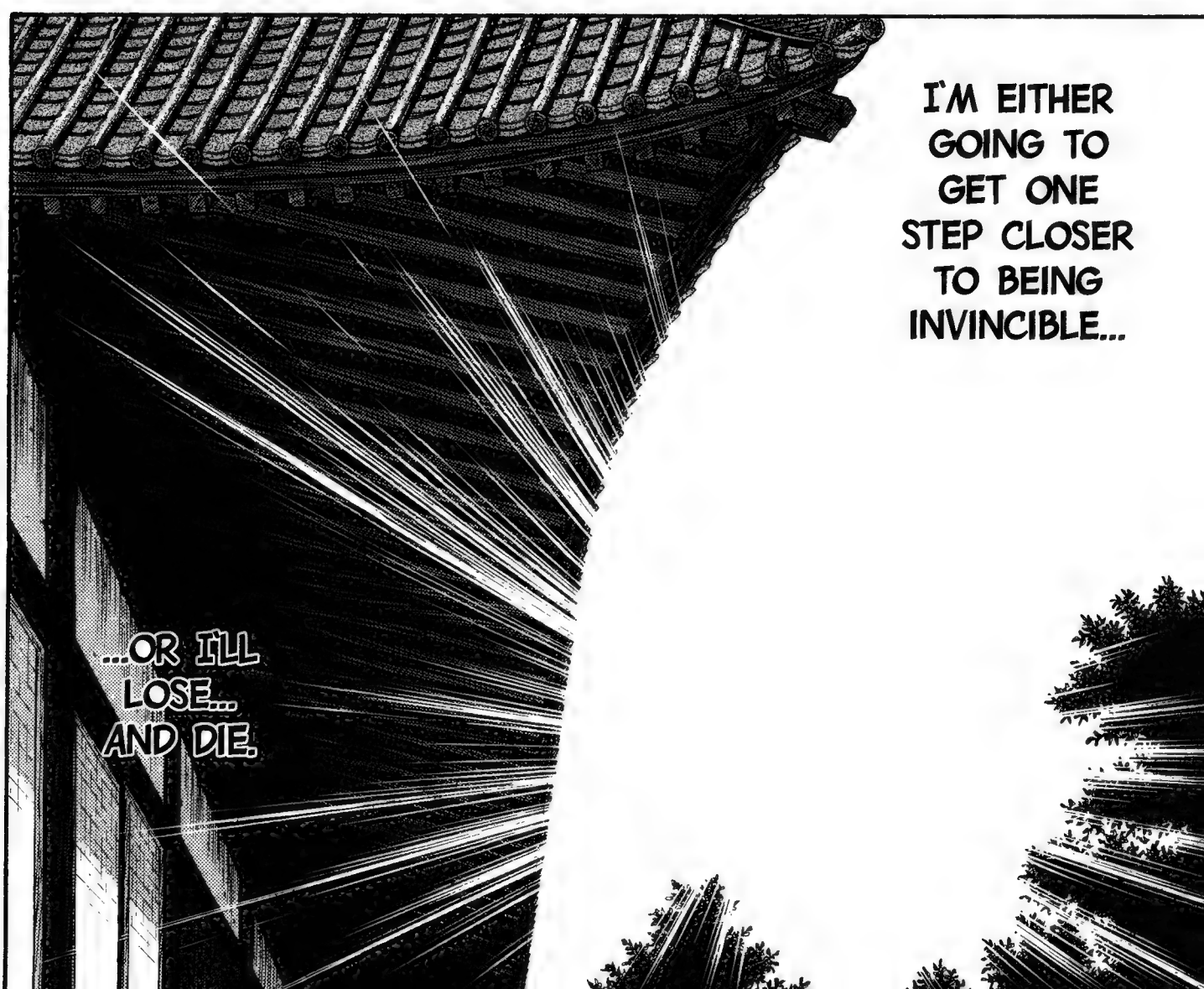

NNGH...
KRICH


HUF
HUF
HUF
...
YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING LIKE YOU USUALLY DO.
YOUR STROKES ARE SO FEEBLE!
HIS SWORD'S GOT NO POWER BEHIND IT.
HE'S TOO SCARED.
PHEW
...
HMPH
TUGG
FEARLESSNESS... THAT WAS HIS ONLY STRENGTH.
MAYBE HE'S NOTHING MORE THAN A BARBARIAN... AN AMATEUR... DID I OVER-RATE HIM?
...


THOK
WHUD


HUH!?
GASP!
!?
HUF
HUF
FWOM
HUF
FWOM


I WAS FEELING TOO UPTIGHT.
BUT I'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE.


I'M EITHER GOING TO GET ONE STEP CLOSER TO BEING INVINCIBLE...
...OR I'LL LOSE... AND DIE.


NOW I'M READY.
KRIK
...
WHAT WAS THAT!?
YOU'RE A STRANGE ONE!!
A WAKE-UP CALL.
I THOUGHT YOU'D GIVEN UP.
GOOD.
...?
KRIK
HMPH!
NO SUCH LUCK.


INSHUN, WATCH OUT! HE'S GOT A FIST FULL OF SAND!


AW, C'MON, AGON! YOU RUINED IT!
I WANTED TO SEE WHAT HE'D DO WITH IT!!


!


...


MY HANDS WERE GETTING SLIPPERY...
FSHH
THERE! THAT'S BETTER...
FSHH


FSHH


HUH!?


YUP.
FWICH


SO THAT'S WHAT THE SAND WAS FOR...


KRICH
NNGH!!
THRAK


FWOOSH


!!

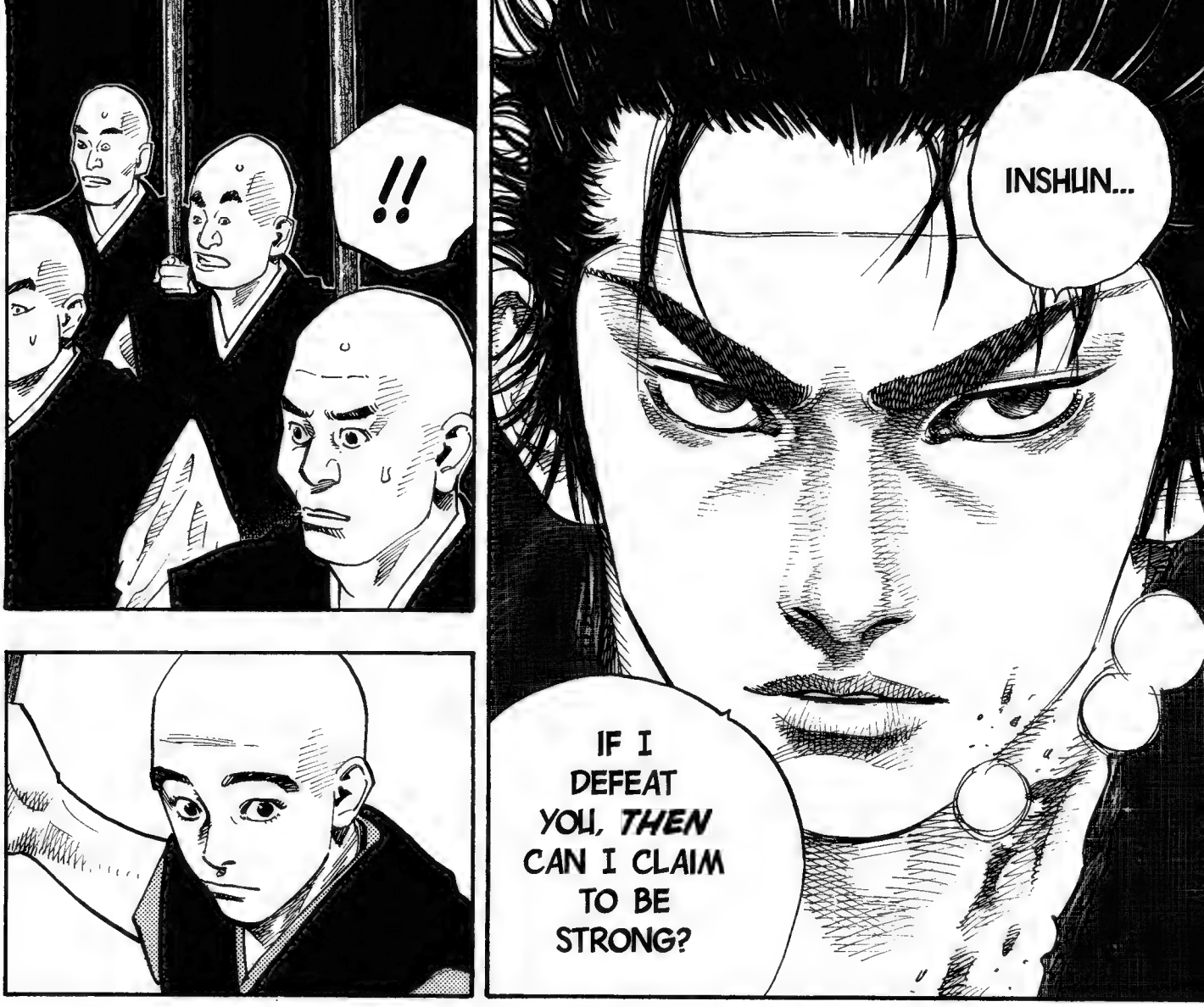

FWOOSH

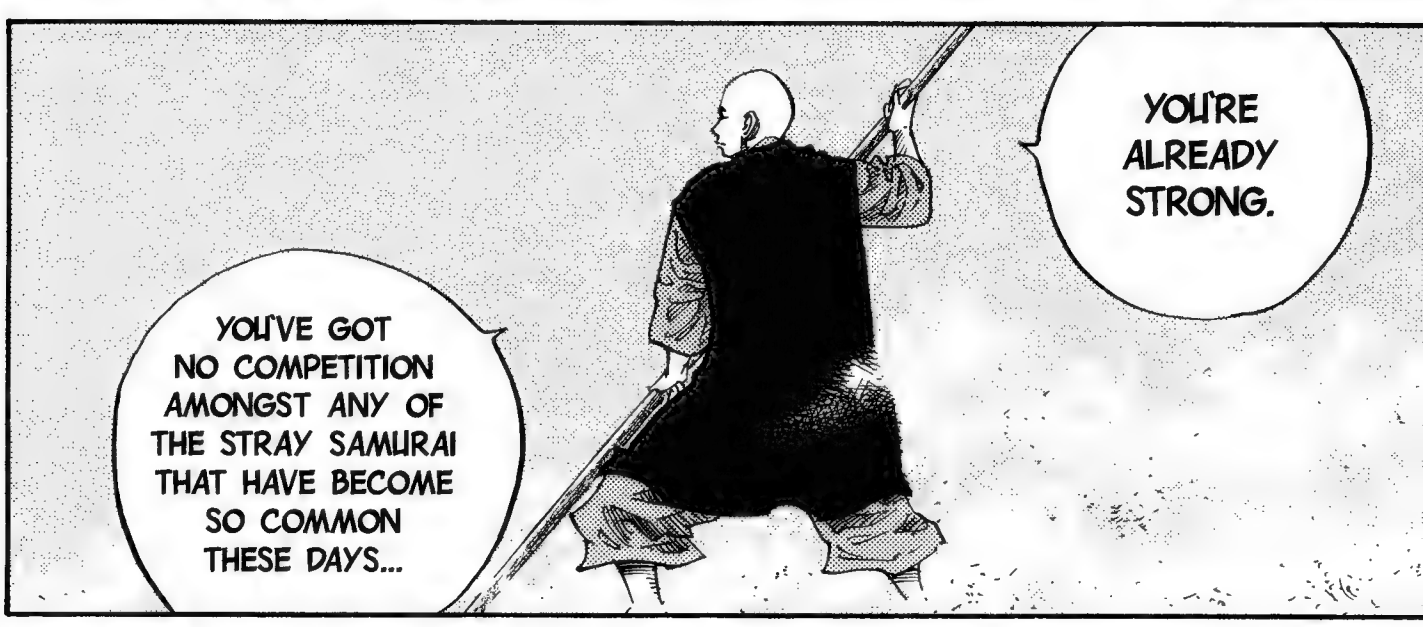

INSHUN!!

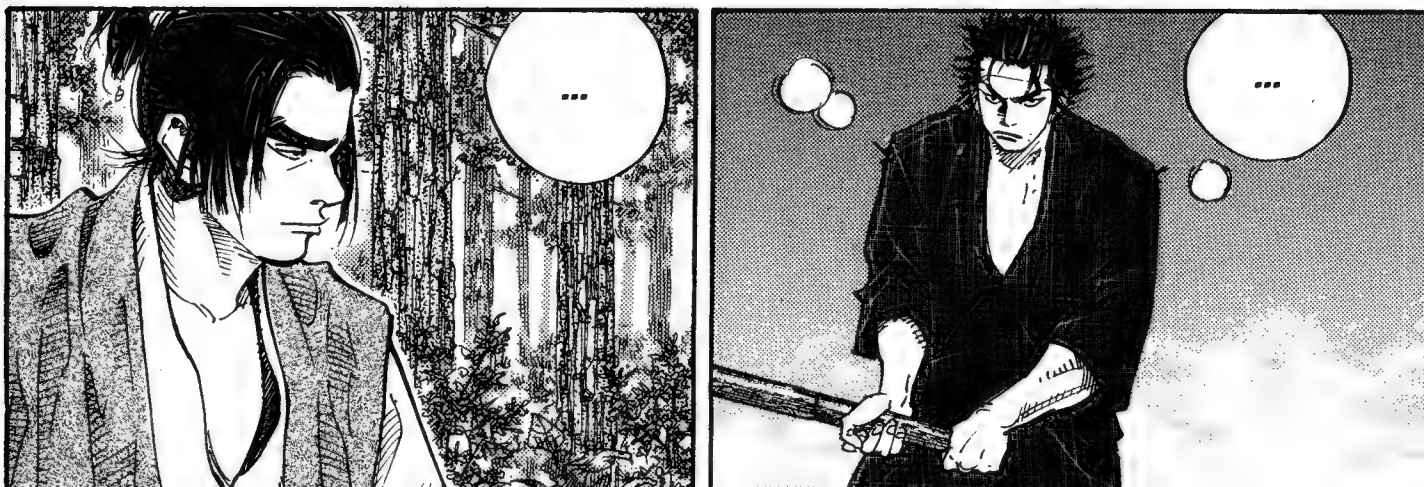

THAK




TMP
...
...OR AM I WEAK?
AM I STRONG...
I THOUGHT SO.
YOU'VE GOT NO SET FORM.
IT'S LIKE I'M FIGHTING A WILD BEAST!!
WHO IS YOUR MASTER?
MUSASHI.
MADE UP MY OWN STYLE.
I HAVE NONE.
HMPH...
THERE'S SUCH POWER TO HIS STROKE NOW...
SUCH STRENGTH!!


!!
INSHUN...
IF I DEFEAT YOU, THEN CAN I CLAIM TO BE STRONG?


YOU'VE GOT NO COMPETITION AMONGST ANY OF THE STRAY SAMURAI THAT HAVE BECOME SO COMMON THESE DAYS...
YOU'RE ALREADY STRONG.


...
...


BUT I DO KNOW THAT YOU'RE REALLY STRONG...
KRICH
I ACTUALLY DON'T KNOW...
...WHETHER I'M STRONG OR WEAK.
IF I BEAT YOU...
...THEN CAN I CLAIM TO BE STRONG?


IF YOU DEFEAT ME, YOU CAN CALL YOURSELF THE MIGHTIEST OF ALL.
SMIRK


THEN LET'S GET STARTED!!


Vagabond

(CHEATER?)




I OVERSLEPT!


HEH HEH. WHAT KIND OF DISCIPLE DOESN'T ACCOMPANY HIS MASTER TO A DUEL?
...WITHOUT ME...
HE WENT TO HŌZŌIN ON HIS OWN...

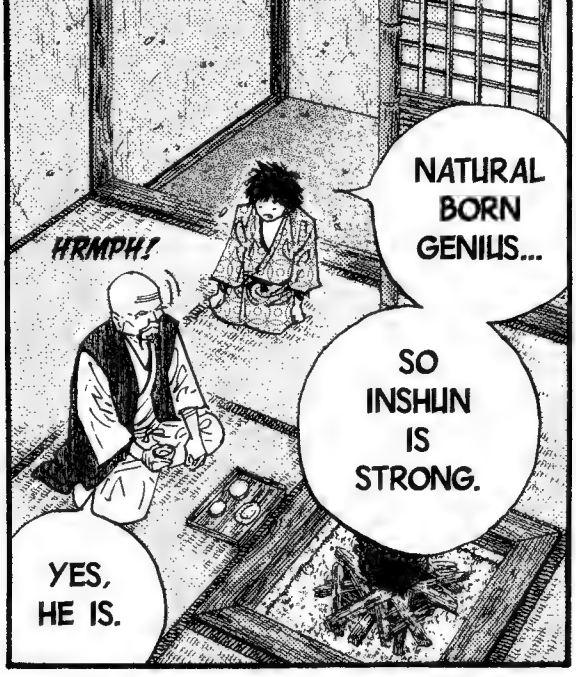

HIS LAST FIGHT ...!?

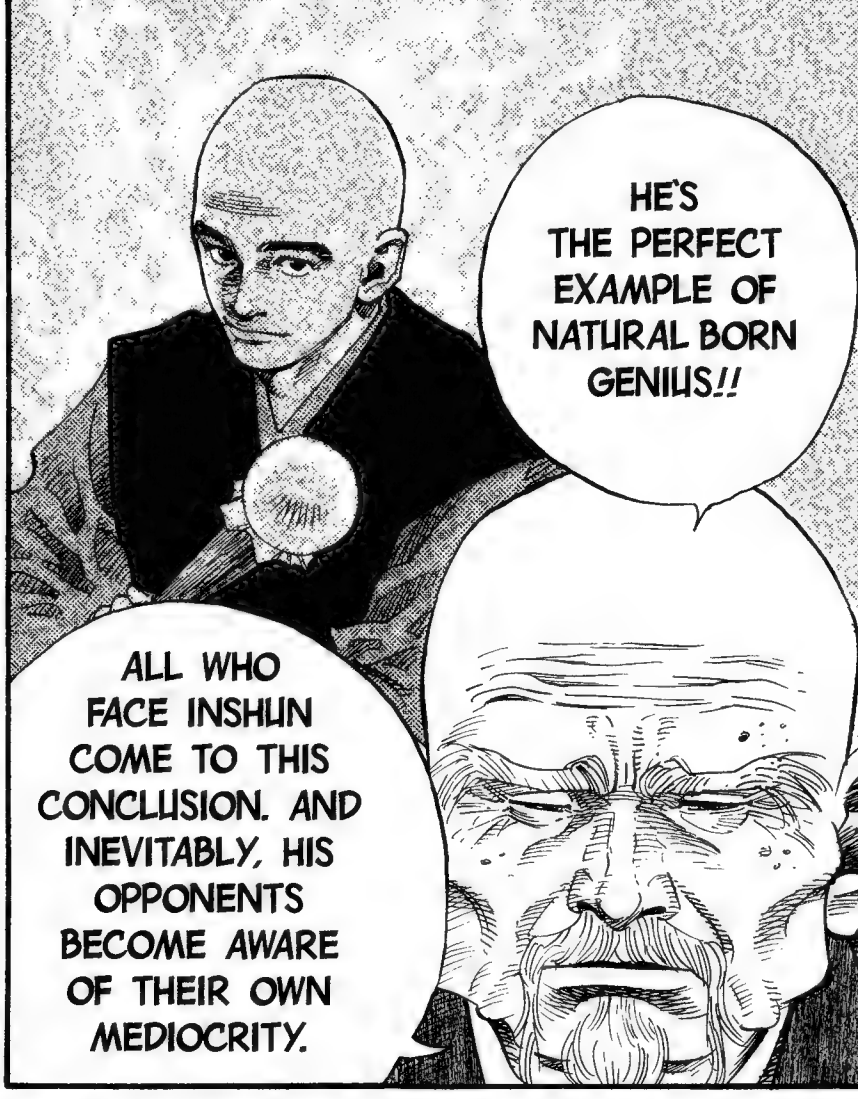

SLURP
YOU KNOW, IT MAY BE HIS LAST FIGHT...

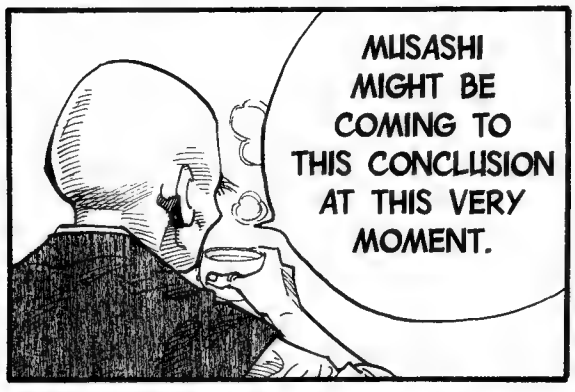

#44 Life


MNCH
WHAT DO YOU MEAN HIS LAST FIGHT!?
MY MASTER CAME HERE TO DEFEAT HŌZŌIN IN'EI!!
HMM...
YOU MEAN THE GREAT IN'EI?
WHAT!?
HEH HEH HEH. MUSASHI DEFEAT IN'EI?
THAT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.
HUH...?
WHY'S HE LOOKING SO SCARY ALL OF A SUDDEN?
THAT'S RIGHT...


IN'EI HAS RETIRED.
HE'S NO LONGER AT HŌZŌIN.
HARUMPH
MASTER!!
HUF
HUF
HUF
...
HUF
HUF
HUF
INSHUN, THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN...
HUF
HUF
INSHUN!
HUF


NATURAL BORN GENIUS...
HRMPH!
SO INSHUN IS STRONG.
YES, HE IS.


HE'S THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF NATURAL BORN GENIUS!!
ALL WHO FACE INSHUN COME TO THIS CONCLUSION. AND INEVITABLY, HIS OPPONENTS BECOME AWARE OF THEIR OWN MEDIOCRITY.


MUSASHI MIGHT BE COMING TO THIS CONCLUSION AT THIS VERY MOMENT.

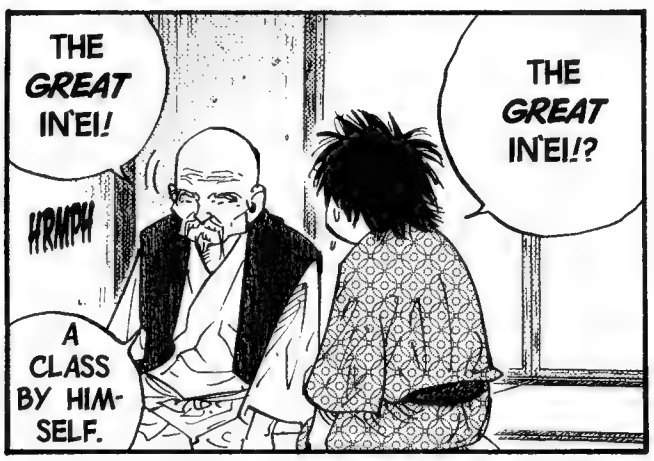

.....!!


JŌTARŌ...
LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING.
AND DON'T YOU FORGET WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY.

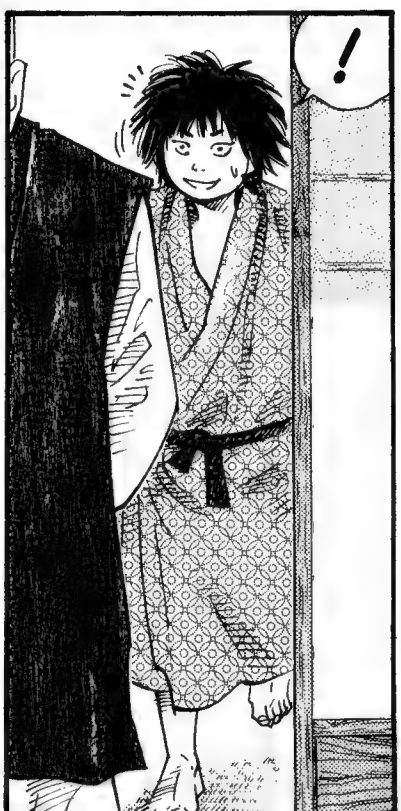

ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY THAT INSHUN IS...
HRMPH!
...THAT INSHUN IS STRONGER THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, HŌZŌIN IN'EI?
...


THE GREAT IN'EI IS IN A CLASS ALL BY HIMSELF!
HRMPH


...
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
THAT BULLY IS ALSO IN A CLASS OF HIS OWN.


THE GREAT IN'EI!
THE GREAT IN'EI!?
HRMPH
A CLASS BY HIM-SELF.


HE'S JUST A KID, YET HE'S RISKED HIS LIFE IN BATTLE COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF TIMES...
THE BLOODTHIRST HE PROJECTS...
HIS EYES...

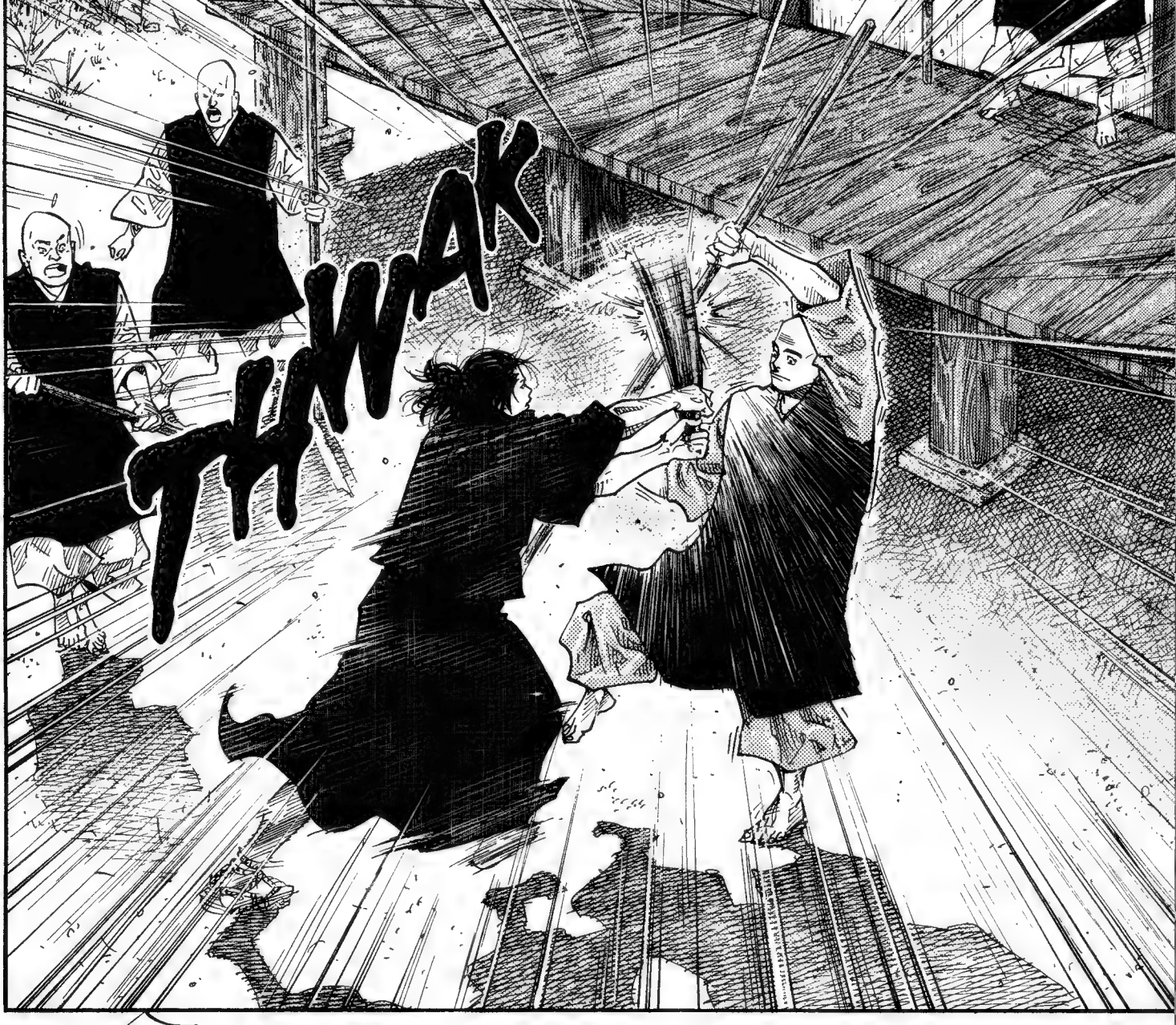

!


THEN MY MASTER IS STRONG!!
RIGHT, OLD MAN?
HOW-EVER...
...THEREIN ALSO LIES THE DANGER.
PERHAPS THAT'S THE ONLY ADVANTAGE HE HAS OVER INSHUN.
MOST SWORDSMEN COULDN'T EVEN HOLD A CANDLE TO HIM.
THAT HE IS.
I KNEW IT!!

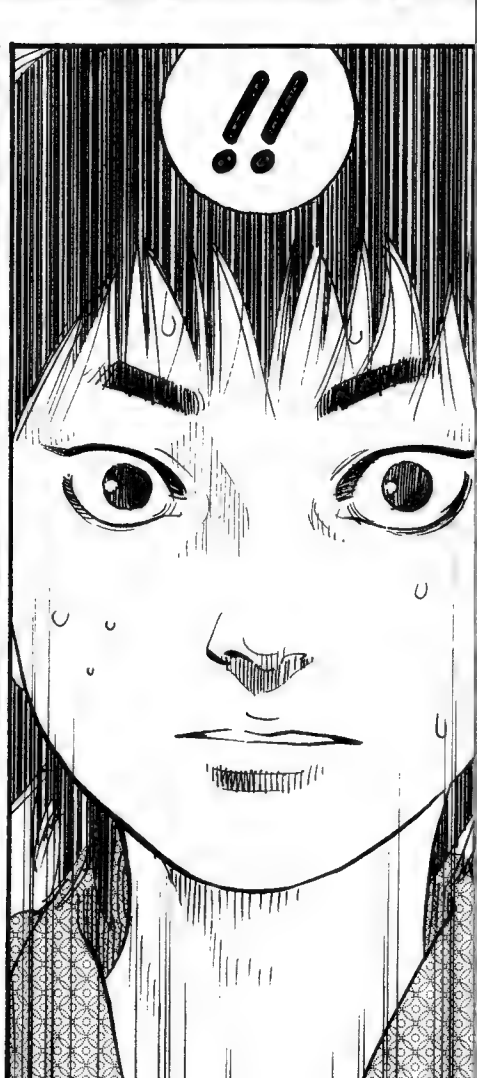



HUF
HŌZŌIN TEMPLE!!
HUF
HUF
THERE IT IS!


YAAAAHH!
HUF
HUF
HUF
INSHUN!
KRICH
THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN!!

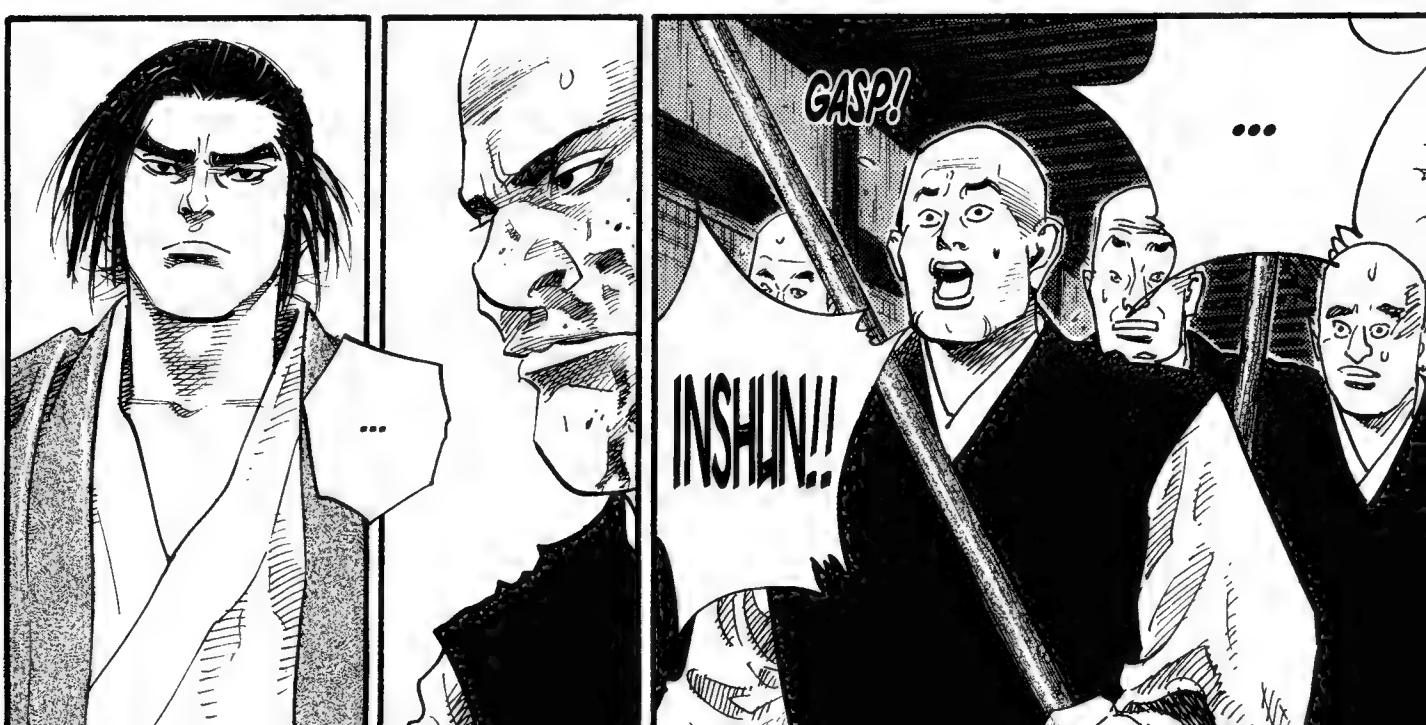

THWAK


!!
THRAK


!!


FWOOSH
AHH!!


THWAK
THWAK
YAH!
YAH!
NNGH!
THWAK


...
GASP!
...
INSHUN!!


FWOSH


I WON'T LET HIM GET AWAY.
I'LL MAKE HIM FIGHT AT MY PACE!

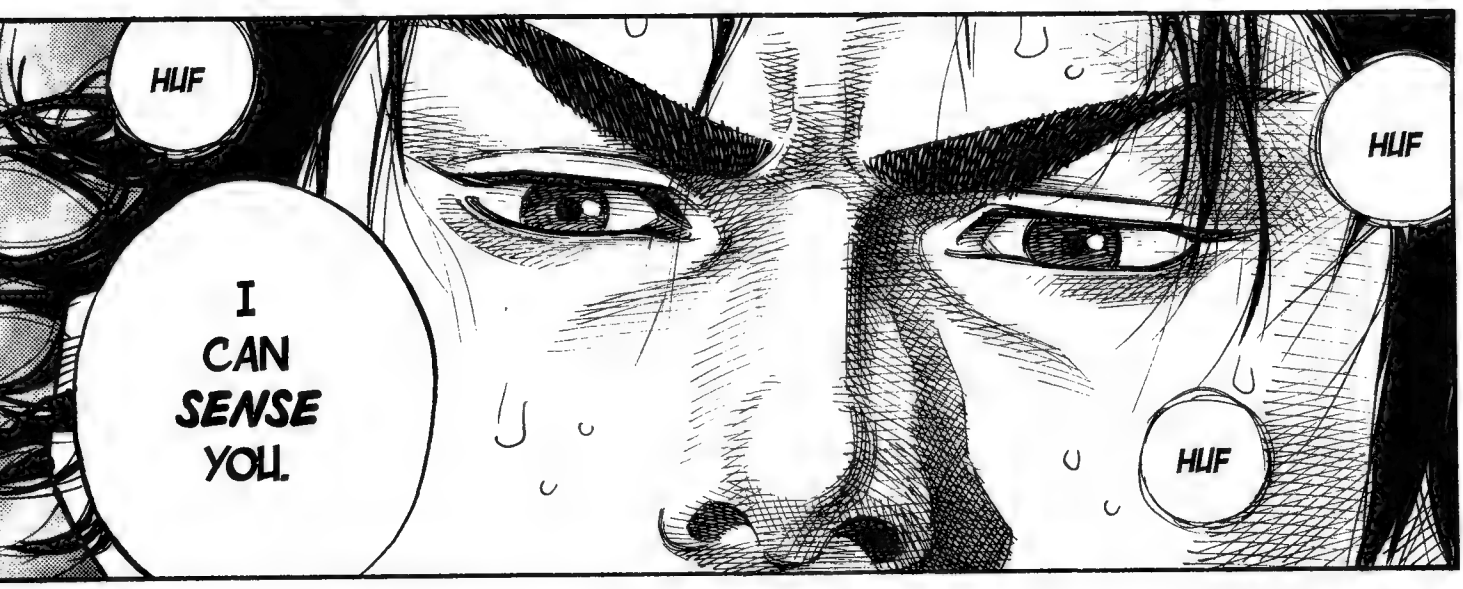

MASTER!!


WHAT!?
TP
THUP
OH, NO!!
THRAK


THOK
YAH!!
!!
...!!
THRAK
!!


HUF
HUF
HUF
KRICH
HUF
HUF
WHAT AMAZING STRENGTH.
HUF
HE'S DOMINATING INSHUN!!
WHAT POWER!!
UNBELIEVABLE!
...
HE IS STRONG!!
I KNEW MY MASTER WAS STRONG!!


HUF
HUF
HUF
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...


HUF
HUF
I CAN SENSE YOU.
HUF


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF


IT'S AS IF YOU'RE PUTTING YOUR LIFE BEHIND EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOUR ATTACKS.




I CAN PICTURE IT IN MY MIND.

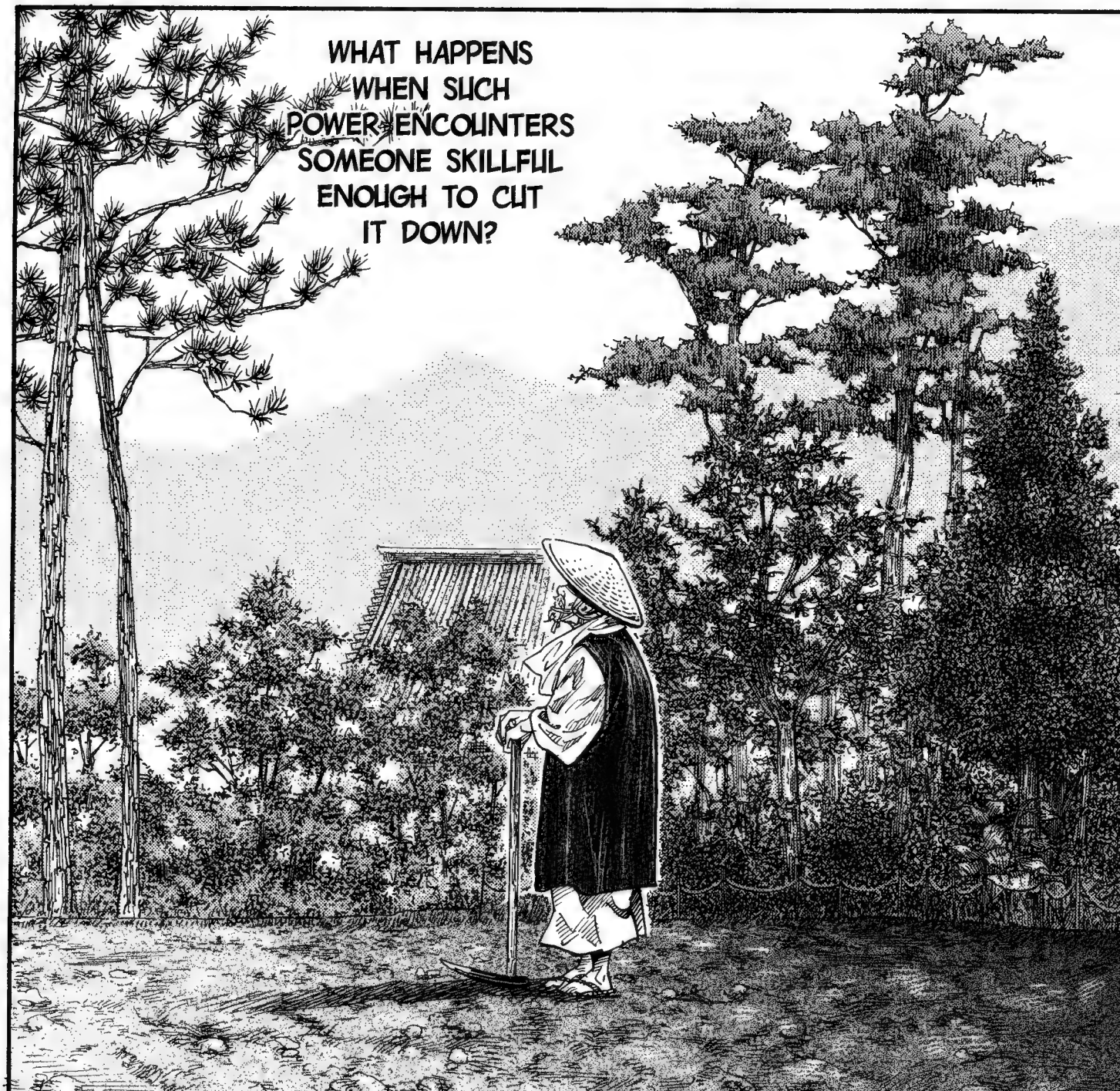

...IN YOUR DEMON-LIKE POWER.


CHIRP
YOU BARE YOUR VERY SOUL...
...AND IT MANIFESTS ITSELF...
CHIRP


CHIRP CHIRP
MUSASHI ...


YOU'RE SO YOUNG AND PURE...


IT'S
THE POWER
OF YOUR
LIFE
ITSELF.


WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN SUCH
POWER ENCOUNTERS
SOMEONE SKILLFUL
ENOUGH TO CUT
IT DOWN?


Vagabond


(THE GREAT IN'EI!)
(MNCH MNCH MNCH...)


#45 Unease

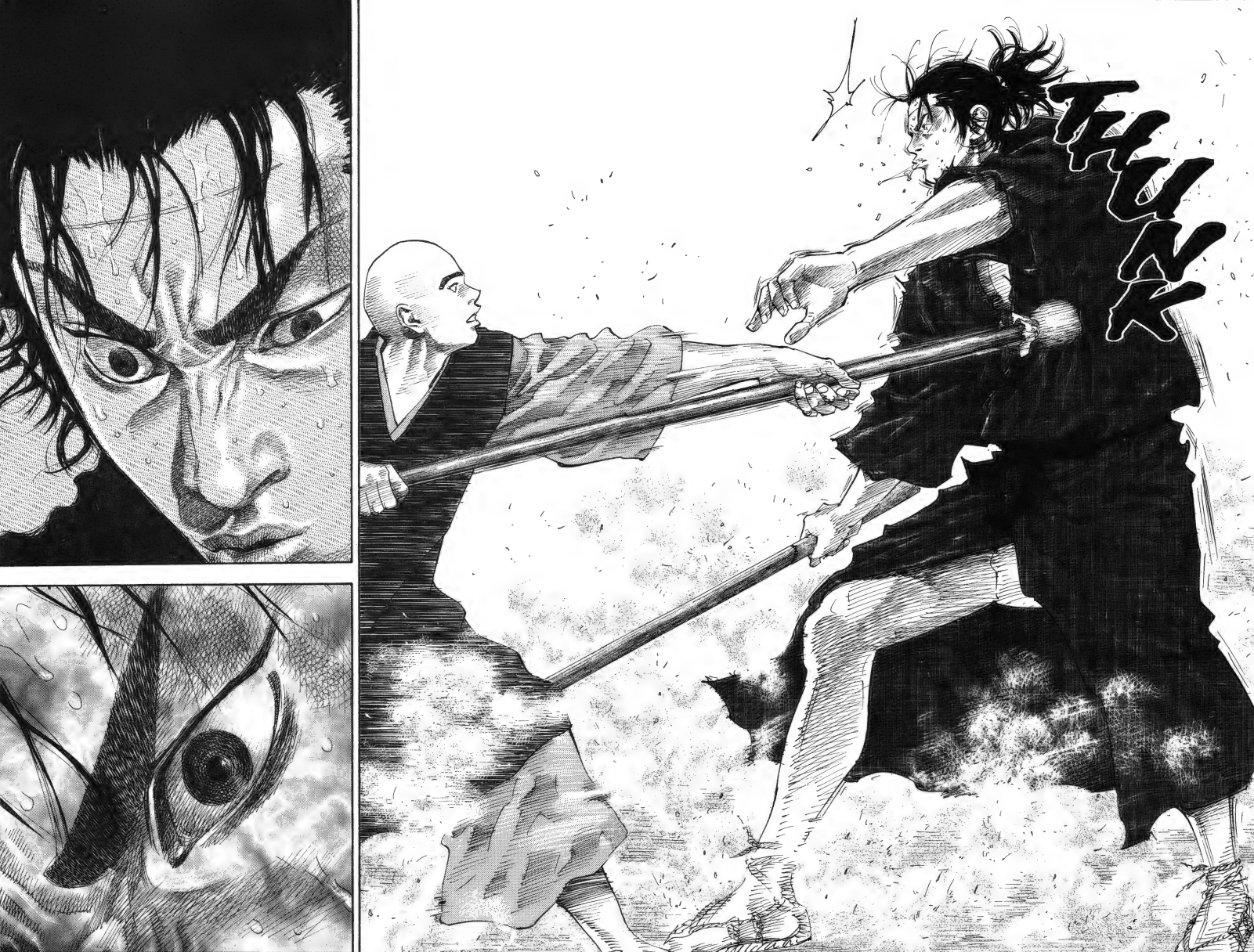

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE ACTUALLY SEEN MY MASTER IN A FIGHT.
I DECIDED TO BECOME HIS DISCIPLE AFTER HEARING HOW HE SINGLE-HANDEDLY TOOK ON THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
HE'S TAKING ON THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN!
HE COULD EASILY BEAT THOSE OTHER MONKS.
...BUT I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS THIS AMAZING!!
AND THAT GUY, TOO!!
...HIM...
HE'D WIN AGAINST HIM...


AND RIGHT NOW, MY MASTER'S GOT INSHUN ON THE RUN!!
WHAT'S GION TŌJI DOING HERE!?
WELL, HE MIGHT BE FAMOUS IN KYOTO AS A YOSHIOKA SAMURAI, BUT HE'S NO MATCH AGAINST INSHUN OF HŌZŌIN.
OR MY MASTER!
H-HEY!!
ALRIGHT!!
FWOM

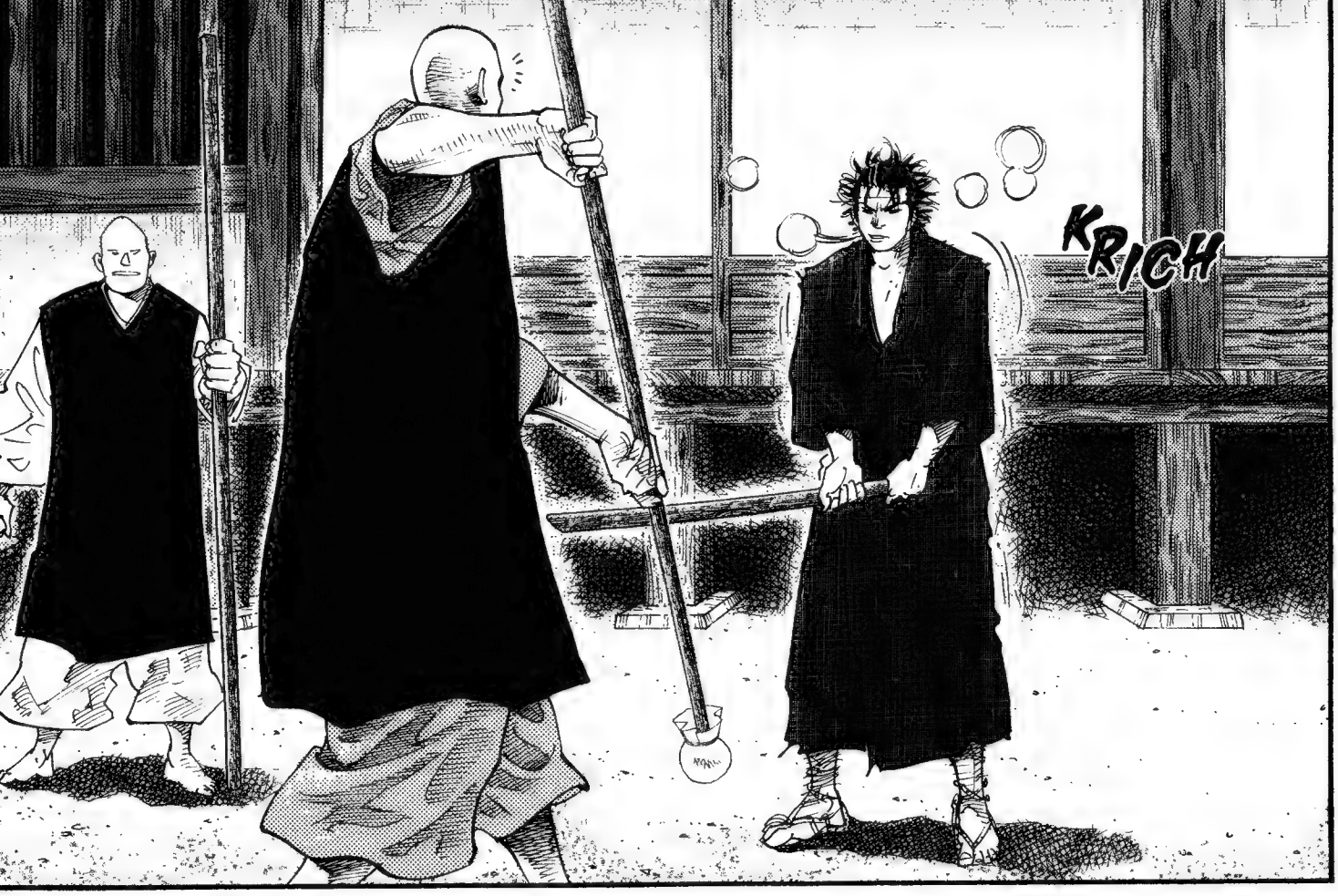

MIYAMOTO
MUSASHI IS
INVINCIBLE!!

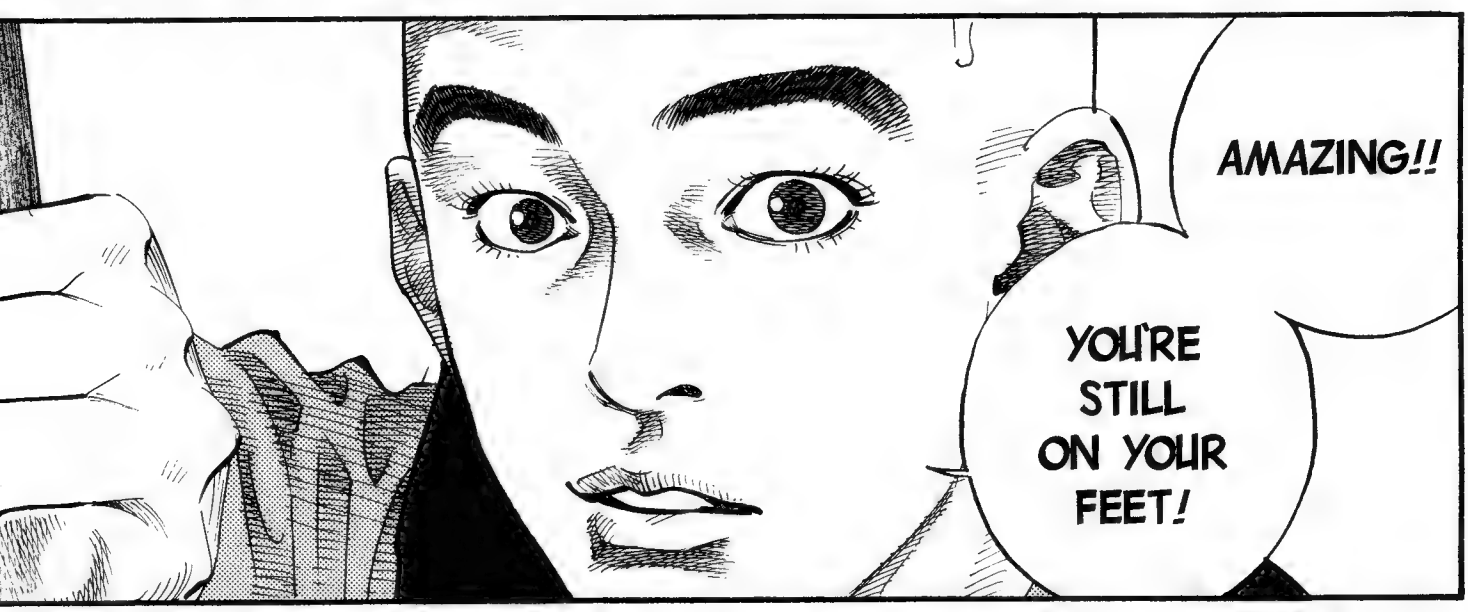

KRICH
HUF
KRICH
HUF
HUF


FWOOSH


THUNK


HUH!?
FWUMP
!!


KRICH


AMAZING!!
YOU'RE STILL ON YOUR FEET!

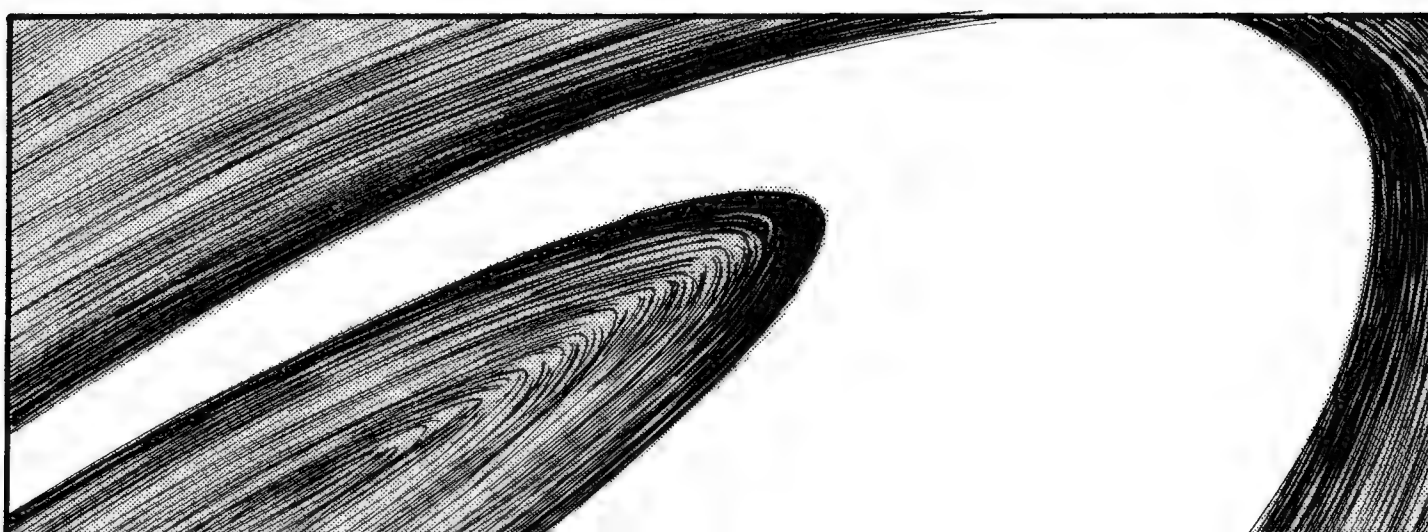

I HAVEN'T EVEN HIT HIM ONCE.
THMP THMP
THMP THMP
HE'S HIT ME FOUR TIMES.


FEEL LIKE THROWING UP.




DAMN
IT!!


THRAK




WUNK
!?
!?
WHAT JUST HAPPENED?


HE CAN'T EVEN SEE THE ATTACKS COMING.


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF


I'VE MANAGED TO FEND OFF YOUR ATTACKS.
GOOD...

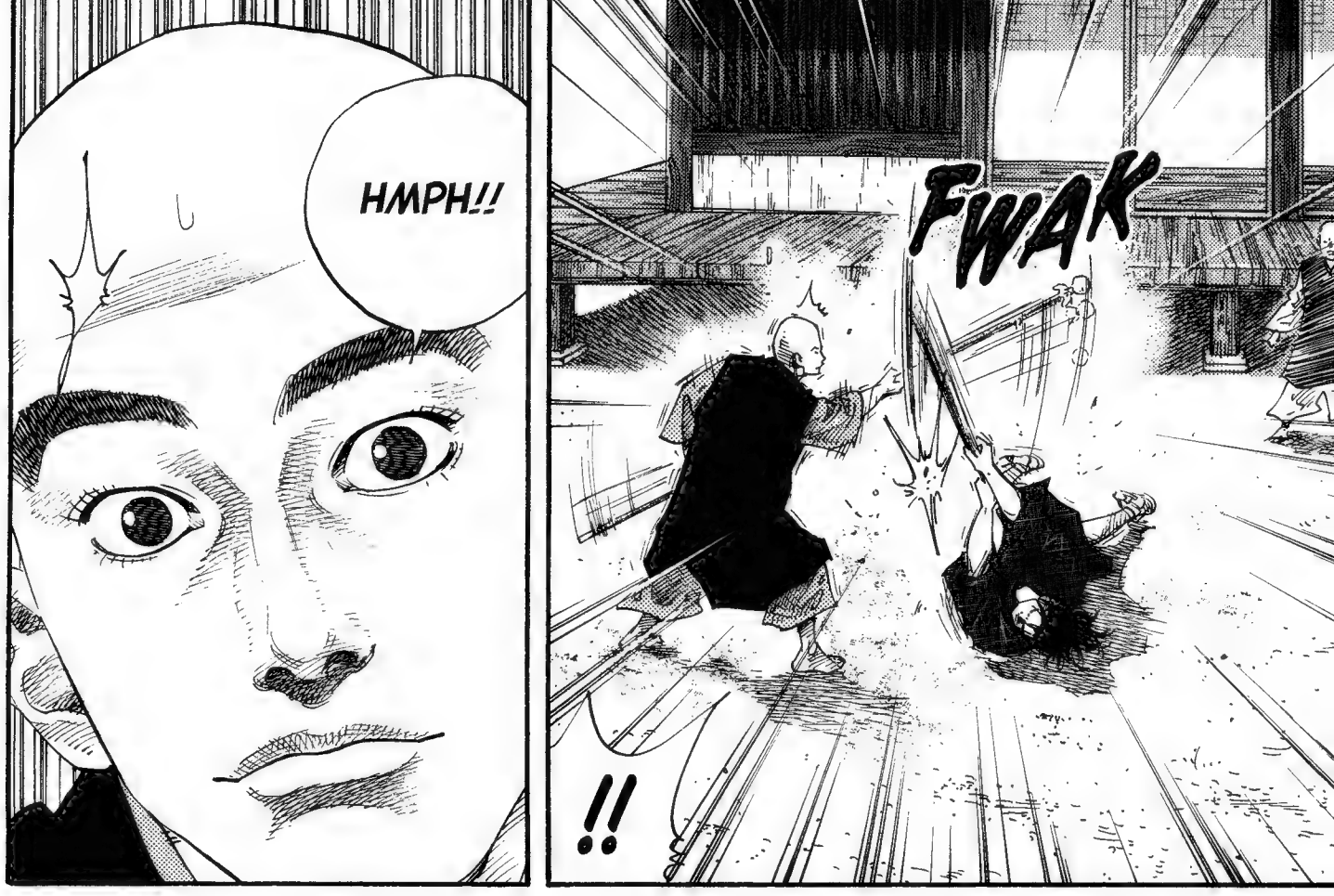

NOW IT'S MY TURN.



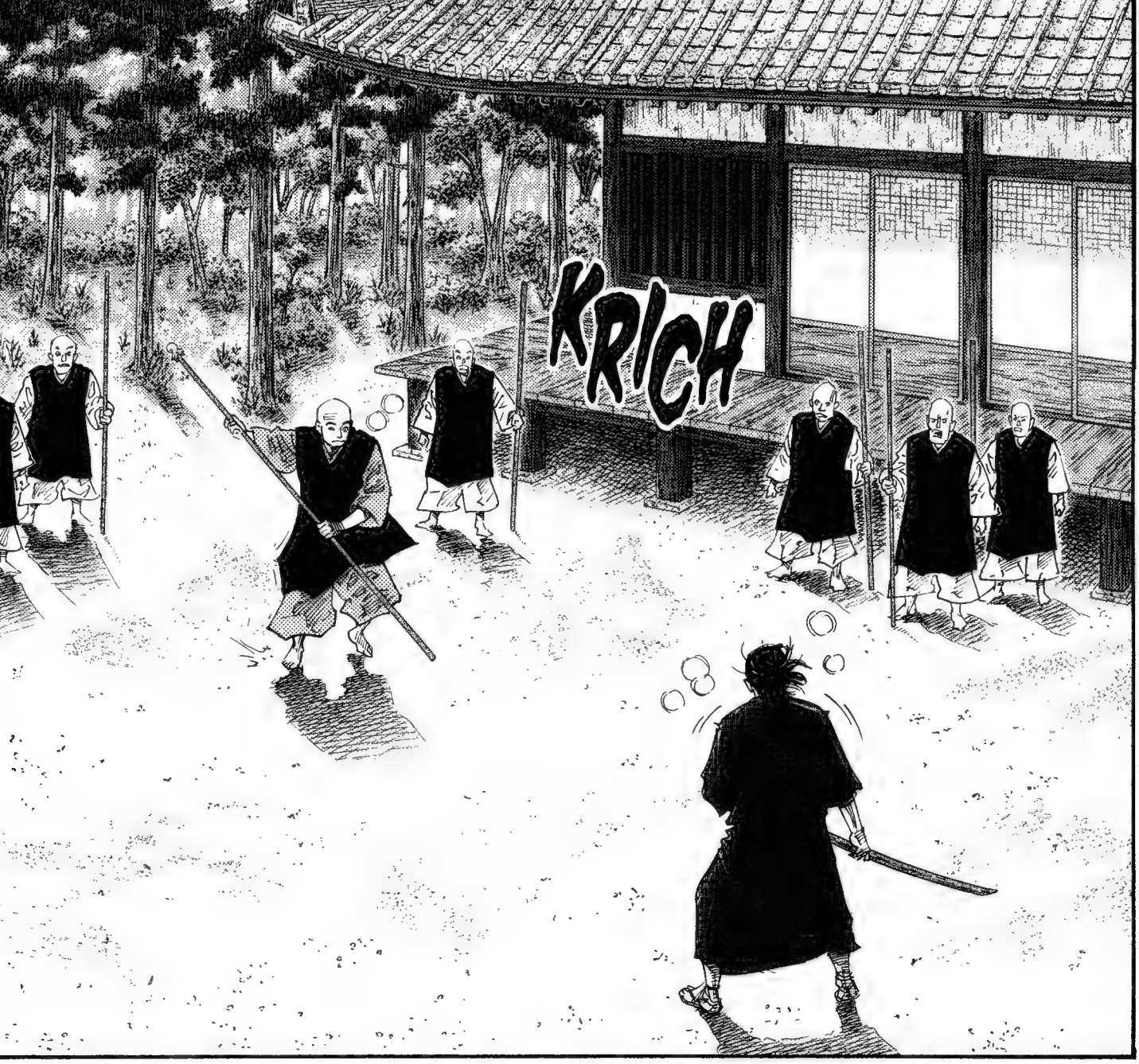

!!
FWISH


FWAK
!!
NO!!
!!
WHUD
NNGH...

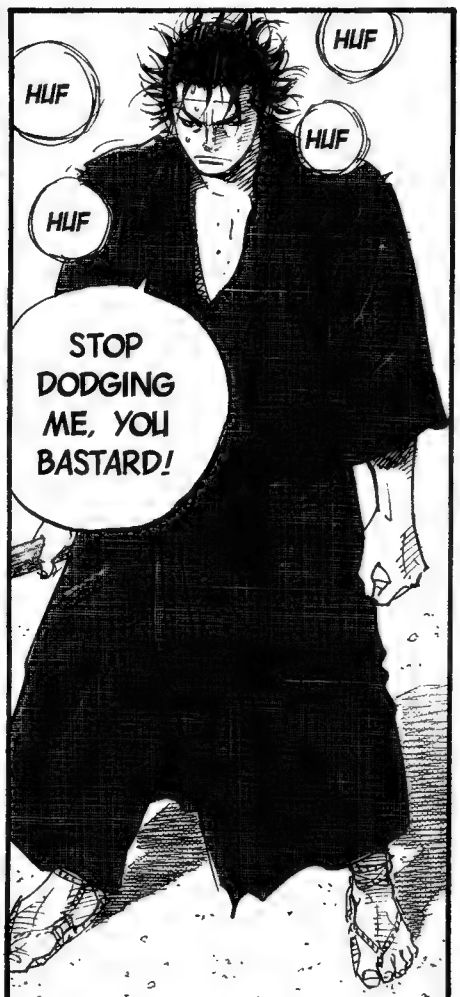

FWICH
HAD ENOUGH!?


HMPH!!
FWAK
!!


FWISH
!!


KRICH


...
HUF
HUF
HUF


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
STOP DODGING ME, YOU BASTARD!


HUF
HUF
HUF
AMAZING!!


ON THIS, HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH INSHUN OF HŌZŌIN...
...MIYAMOTO MUSASHI FELT AN OVERWHELMING UNEASE.

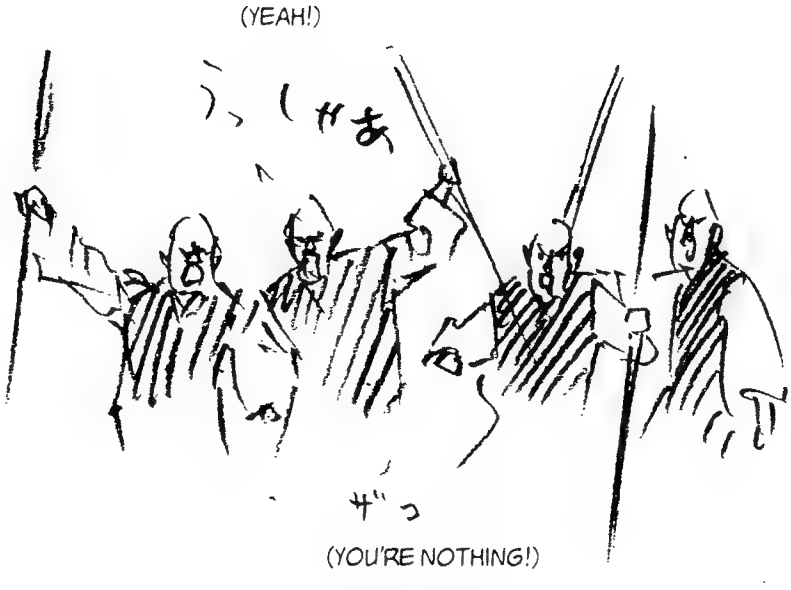

AND HE HAD ONLY ONE THING WITH WHICH TO FIGHT IT OFF...


YOU'RE DEAD...
...RAGE.
YOU'RE LEAVING YOURSELF WIDE OPEN!
YOU FOOL!


THUNK


Vagabond

(YEAH!)



(YOU'RE NOTHING!)


WHUD


DAMN IT!!
HUF
HUF
NO...
KOFF...
HAK...
INSHUN!!



#46 The Demon Within


THAT'S IT!!
KLAP KLAP
HUF!
HUF!
KOFF!
KOFF!
THIS MATCH IS OVER!!
HOW DARE THEY--?
KOFF!
KOFF!
KLAP KLAP
HUF!
HUF!
IT WAS A GREAT BOUT!
YOU'RE ALL WRONG!!
HUF!
HUF!
HAK!

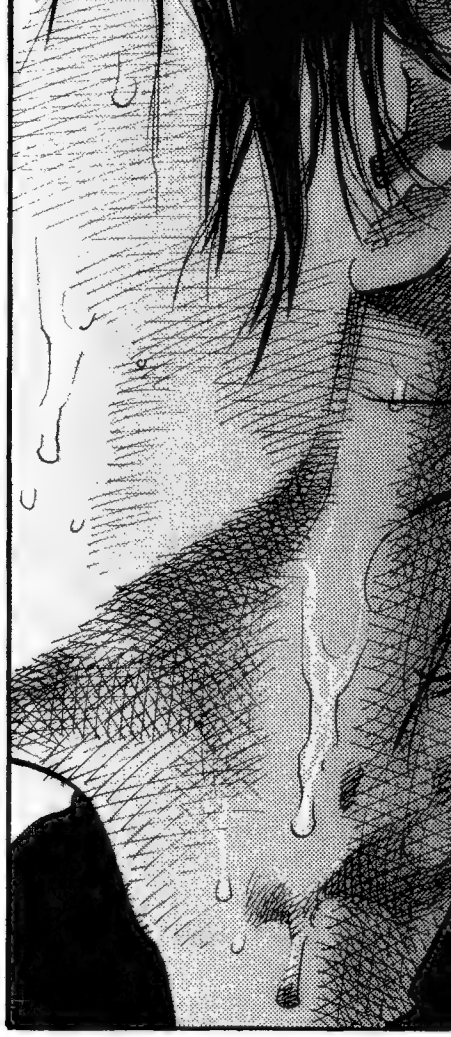


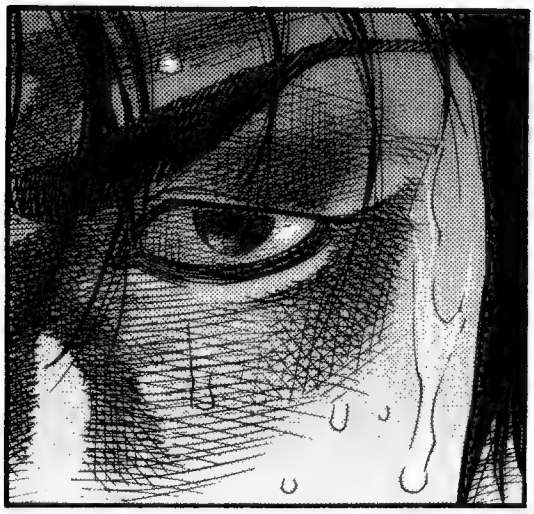



TWITCH

WHEN HUMANS BATTLE ONE ANOTHER...

A CERTAIN DEMON OBSERVES IN SILENCE, WAITING IN ANTICIPATION.





IT CLINGS TO US...

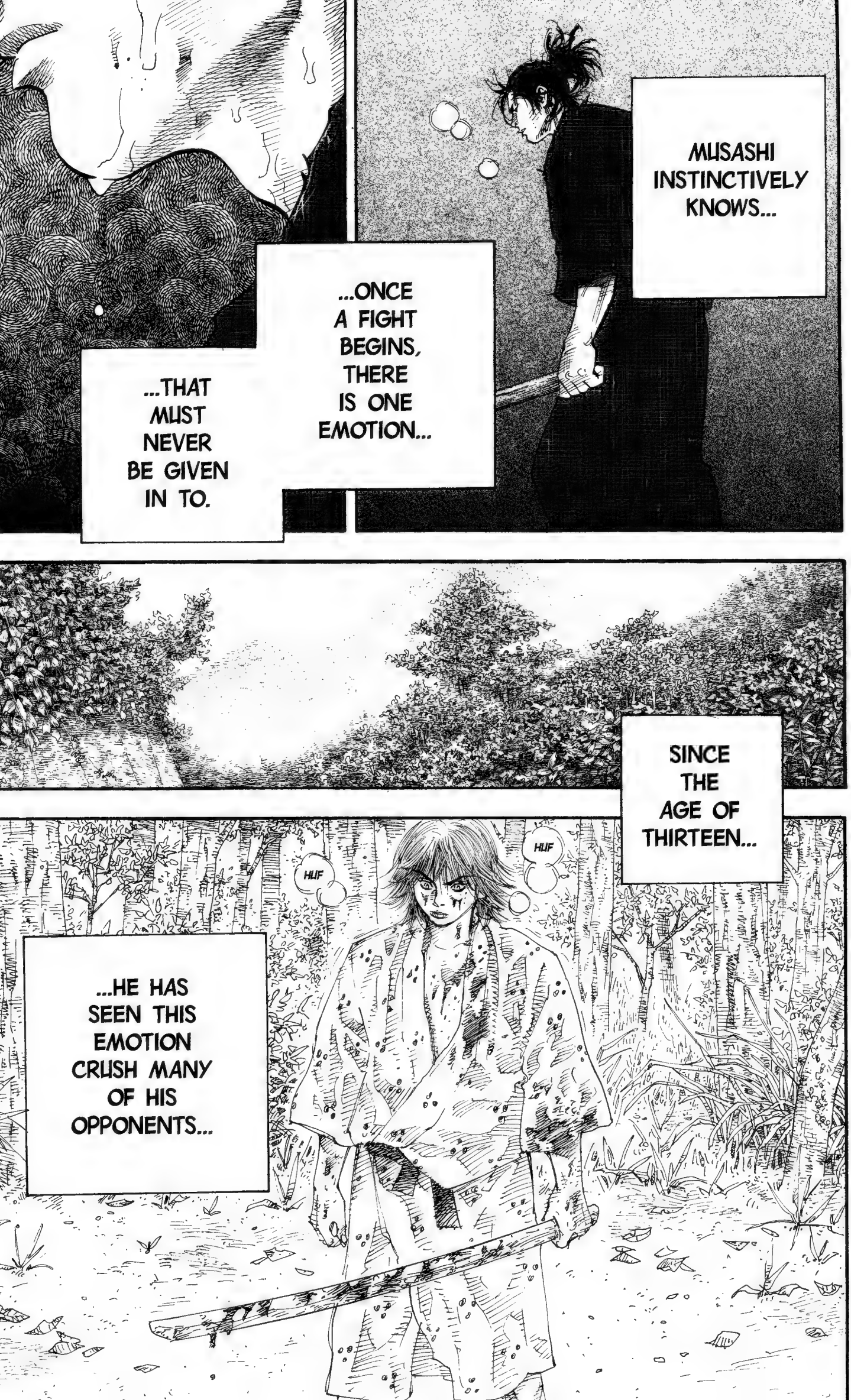
WAITING TO DEVOUR OUR VERY SOULS...

NEVER MOVING ON ITS OWN...

IT SITS STILL, OBSERVING FROM THE DARKNESS...


PATIENTLY IT WAITS, UNTIL FINALLY THE WEAK SEEK REFUGE WITHIN ITS DARKNESS...
KOFF!!
KOFF!!
HUF!
HUF
HUF


YOU DON'T THINK YOU'VE ALREADY WON, DO YOU?
KOF
HUF
HUF
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CONTINUE YOUR ATTACK...?
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
KOF
FWOM
HM?
INSHUN...
ACCEPT YOUR DEFEAT!!
HE KNOCKED YOU DOWN!!
IT'S OVER!!
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
MASTER ...
HUF!
HUF!


MUSASHI INSTINCTIVELY KNOWS...
...ONCE A FIGHT BEGINS, THERE IS ONE EMOTION...
...THAT MUST NEVER BE GIVEN IN TO.
SINCE THE AGE OF THIRTEEN...
HUF
HUF
...HE HAS SEEN THIS EMOTION CRUSH MANY OF HIS OPPONENTS...


MUSASHI KNOWS ONLY TOO WELL HOW THE DEMON "FEAR" CAN MAKE EVEN THE MIGHTIEST OF MEN FALL.


FWIP
AARGH!


ARGH!
FWICH
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN THAT...


THRAK
!!
...TO TAKE DOWN MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!


FWICH
YOU CHEATER!!
YOU DISHONOR-ABLE--
BASTARD!
URGH...
NO!!
KRICH
THRAK
EVEN IF YOU WERE ARMED WITH A REAL SPEAR...!!
!!
URGH...

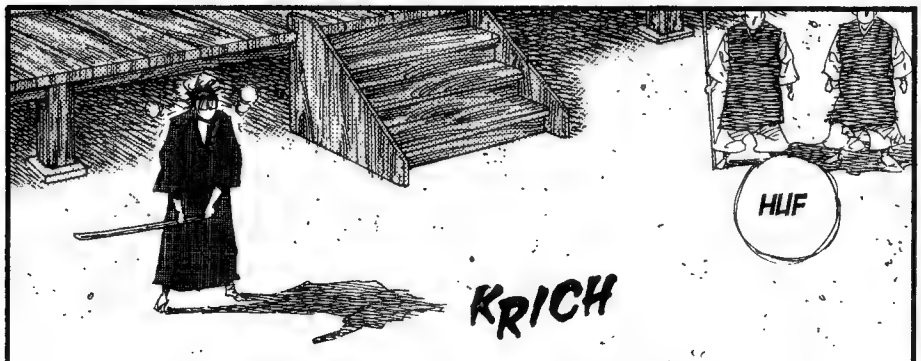

!
ZINNG
FWOOSH
YOU STILL DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES...
...
NNGH.
THRAK
...TO KILL ME!!
FWOOSH


I'M
NOT
GONNA
LOSE.






!!
FOK


HUF
KRICH

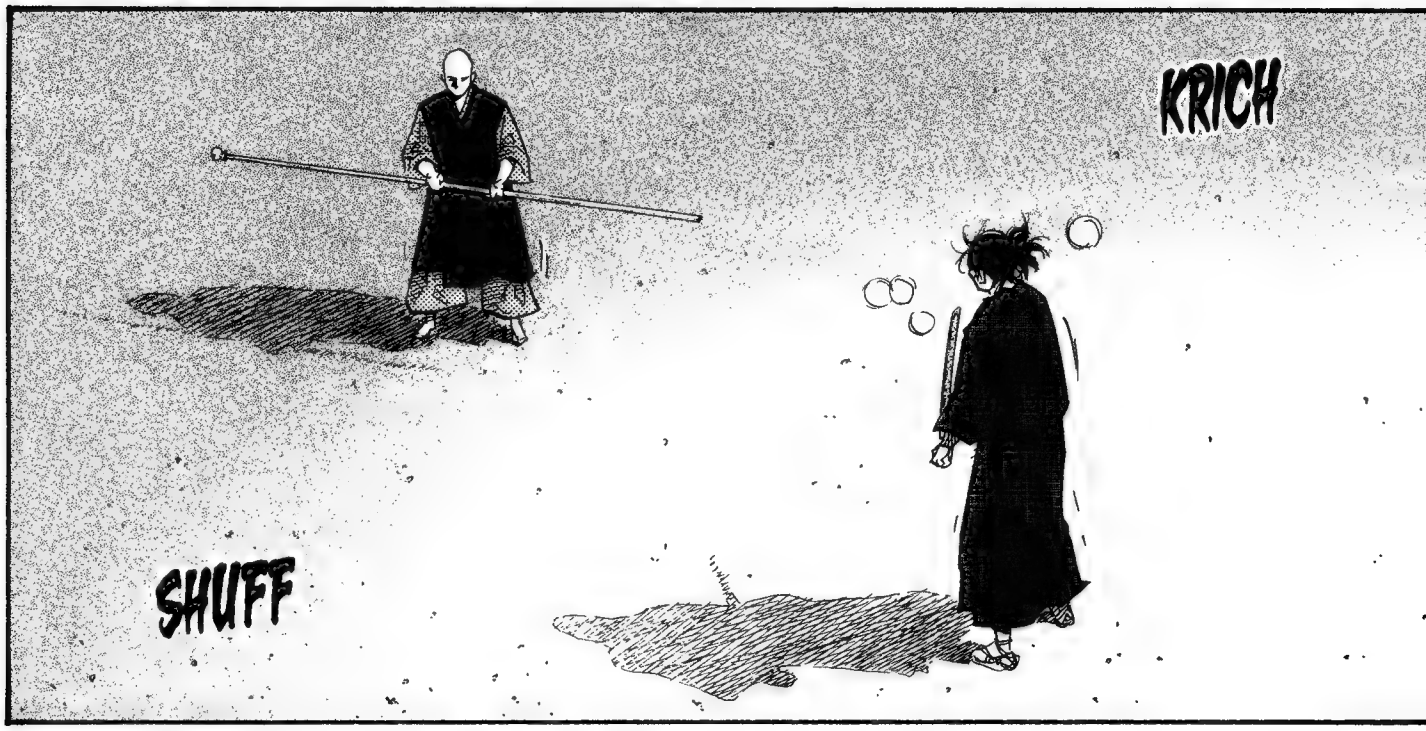

!!


HUF
HUF

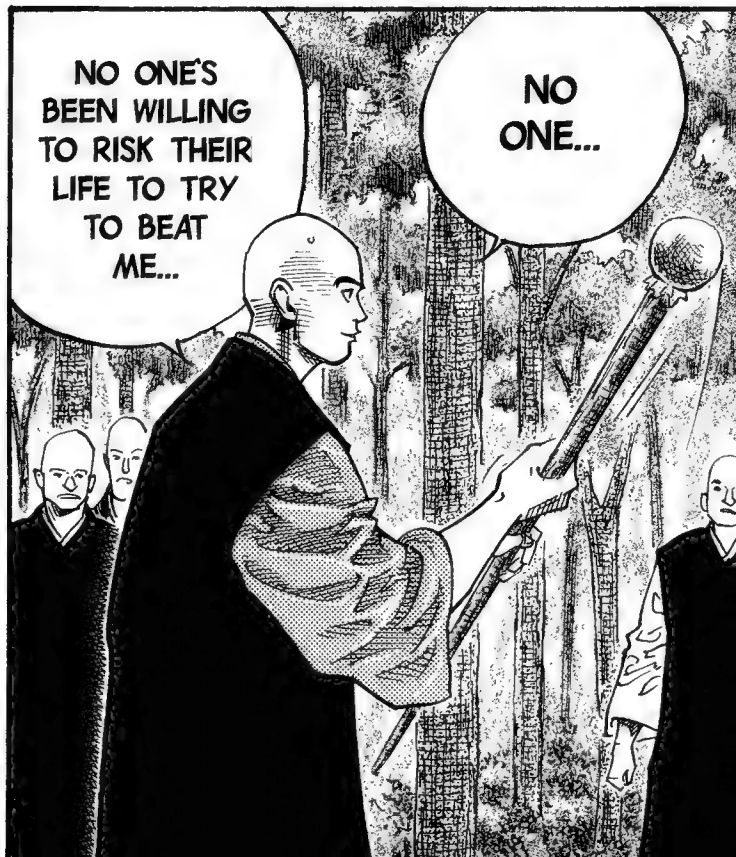

ARGH...


HUF
HUF
YOU ALMOST HAD ME!
HUF
HUF
PHEW!
HUF
HAK
HUF
HAK!!
HAK!!
PHEW!
...


I HAVE TO KILL YOU, DON'T I...?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE UP...


KRICH
SHUFF


I'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED A FIGHT LIKE THIS BEFORE.

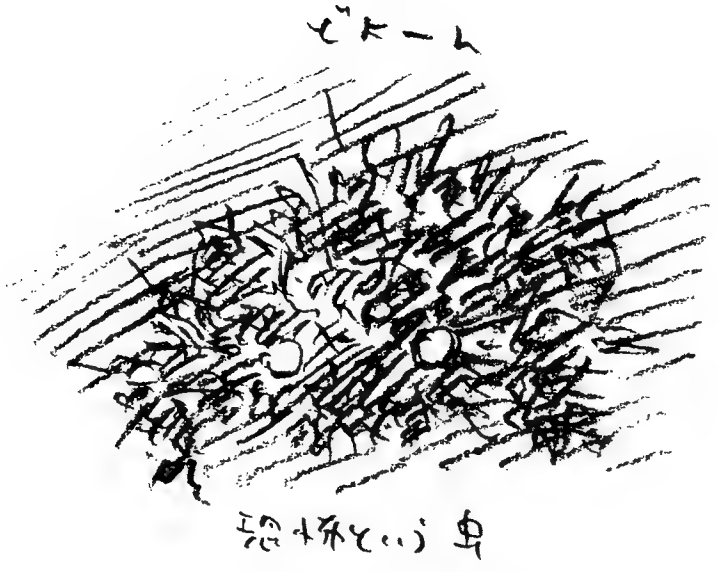

NO ONE'S BEEN WILLING TO RISK THEIR LIFE TO TRY TO BEAT ME...
NO ONE...


KRICH
A BATTLE TO THE DEATH...
...THIS MATCH...
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
...IT'S GOING TO MAKE ME EVEN STRONGER THAN I AM NOW!
I JUST KNOW IT!


I'M GOING TO KILL YOU.
KRICH
DO NOT BEAR ME ANY ILL WILL.

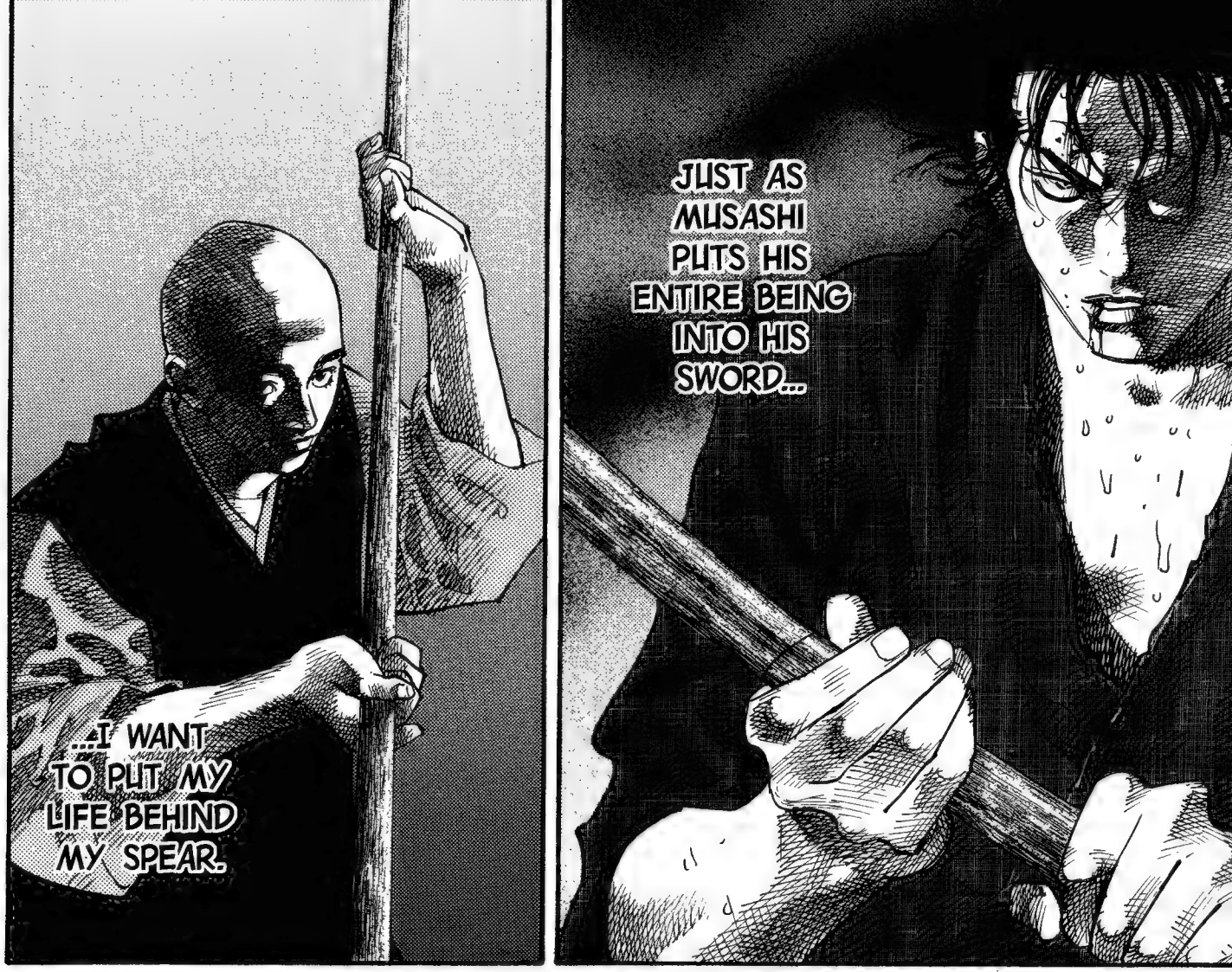

Vagabond

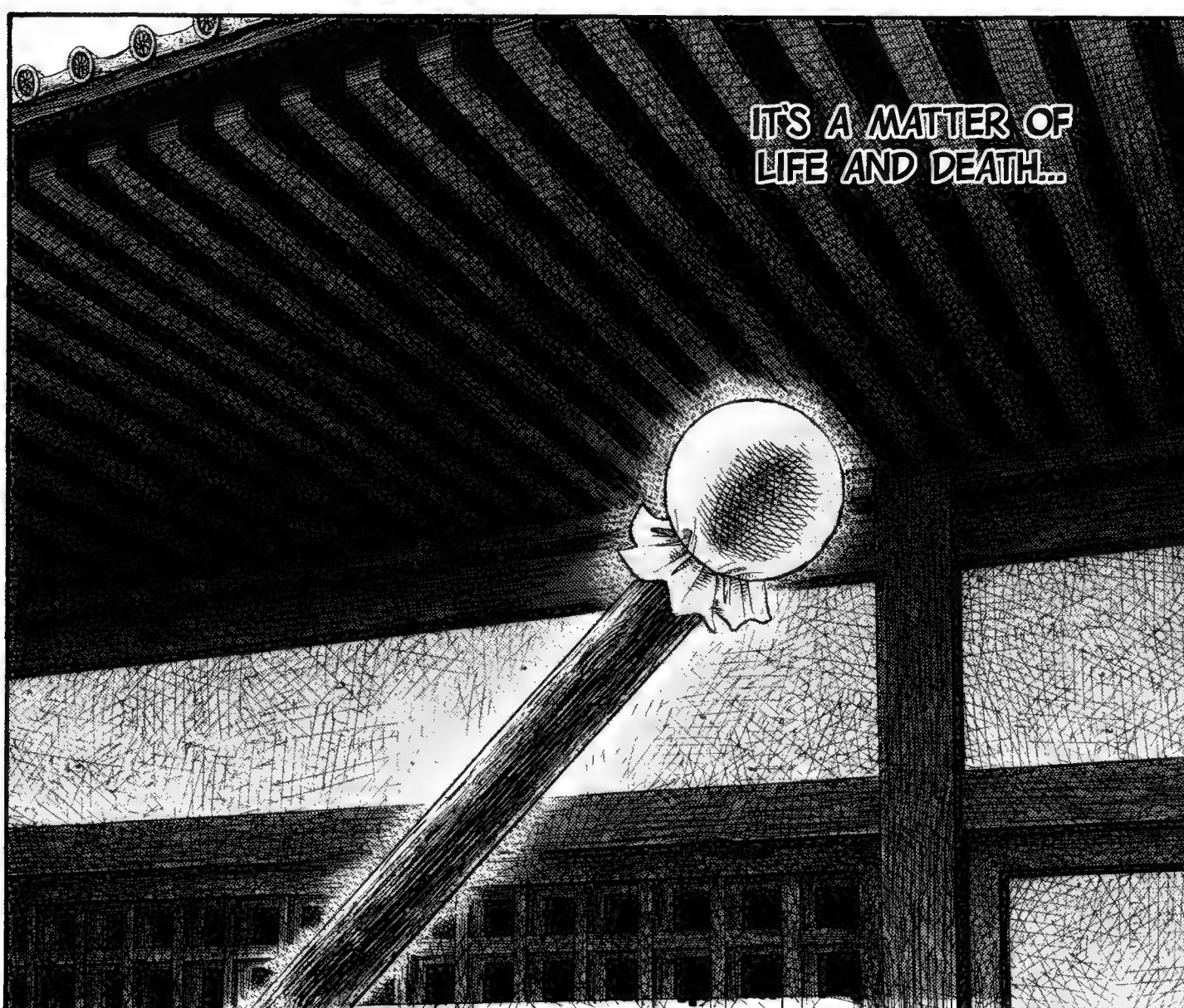
(LURCH)



(THE BUG CALLED "FEAR")


STRONGER...
THIS MATCH WILL MAKE ME STRONGER!


...I WANT TO PUT MY LIFE BEHIND MY SPEAR.
JUST AS MUSASHI PUTS HIS ENTIRE BEING INTO HIS SWORD...


IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH...


IF I CAN TAKE IT THAT FAR...
THEN EVEN DEVILS AND DEMONS WILL FALL BEFORE ME!!

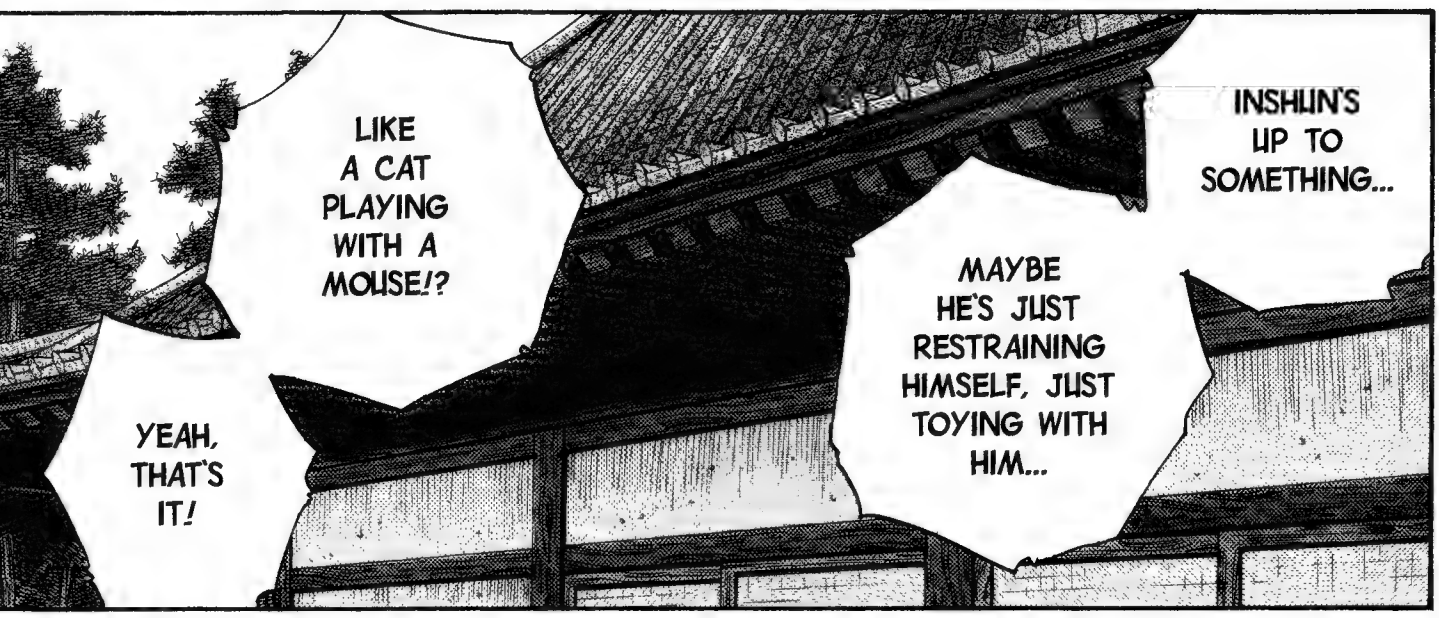

#47 Fear
GASP!
!!
YAHHH!!

!! THOR


MASTER!
...
URR...
URGH...
KRICH
YAHH!


!!
FWICK
HUF!
HUF!
HUF!
HUFF!
HUFF!


ONE BLOW'S USUALLY ENOUGH TO PUT YOU IN BED FOR DAYS.
RIGHT?
YEAH!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
GULP...
MUSASHI'S STILL ON HIS FEET AFTER TAKING ALL OF INSHUN'S BLOWS...!!


LIKE A CAT PLAYING WITH A MOUSE!?
YEAH, THAT'S IT!
MAYBE HE'S JUST RESTRAINING HIMSELF, JUST TOYING WITH HIM...
INSHUN'S UP TO SOMETHING...


...BUT HE LOOKS SO HAPPY!!
LOOK!
HE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS FIERCE FIGHT...


FWISH
ARGH!!
YOUR IDLE CHATTER DISGRACES THE NAME OF HŌZŌIN.
LOOK AT THIS MAN!
HUF
HAK
HUF
HUF
UNDER-ESTIMATE HIM...
...AND YOU'LL BE KILLED IN AN INSTANT!!


FWISH
MUSASHI SOMEHOW MANAGES TO JUST BARELY AVOID FATAL BLOWS!!
EVEN NOW!!


HUF
THIS IS THE PURE INSTINCT...
HUF
HAK!!
HUF
HAK!!


...OF A NATURAL BORN FIGHTER!!
HUF
HUF
HUF


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
KRICH
LIKE A STARVING BEAST LURKING DEEP IN THE FOREST...
...WITH STRENGTH AND DETERMIN-ATION...
...SO INTENSE AND FIERCE...
KRICH

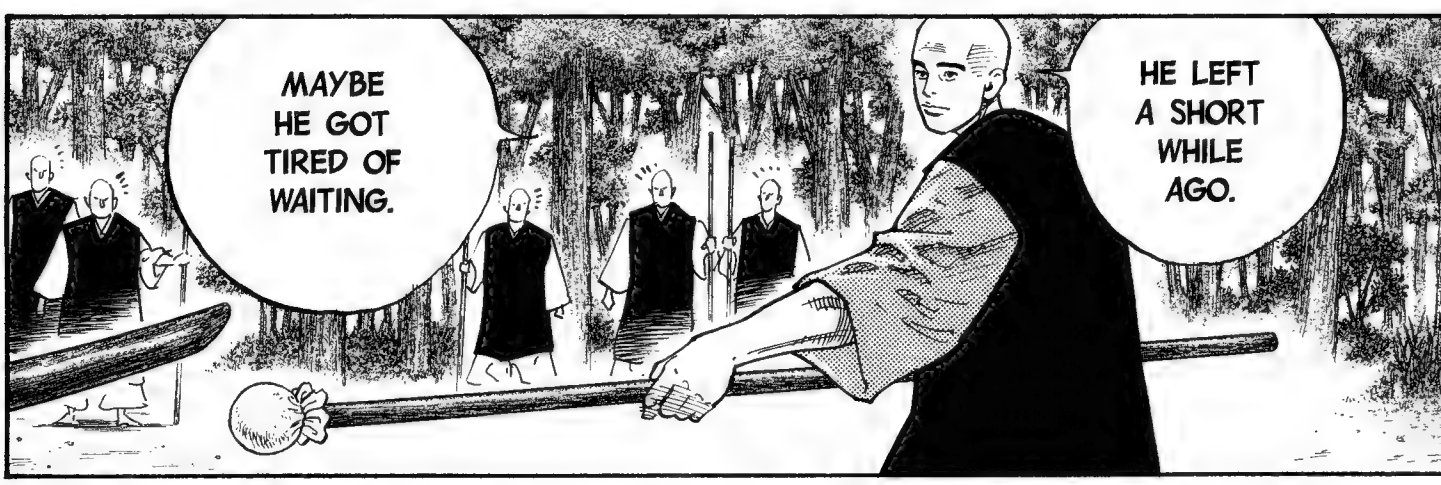

KRICH
HUF
HUF
THAT'S HOW I WANT TO BE.


HE'S GONNA BE KILLED.


MY MASTER'S GOING TO BE KILLED.
SOME-ONE HELP.


ATTACK!
HUF
HUF
HUF
COME ON, ATTACK!!

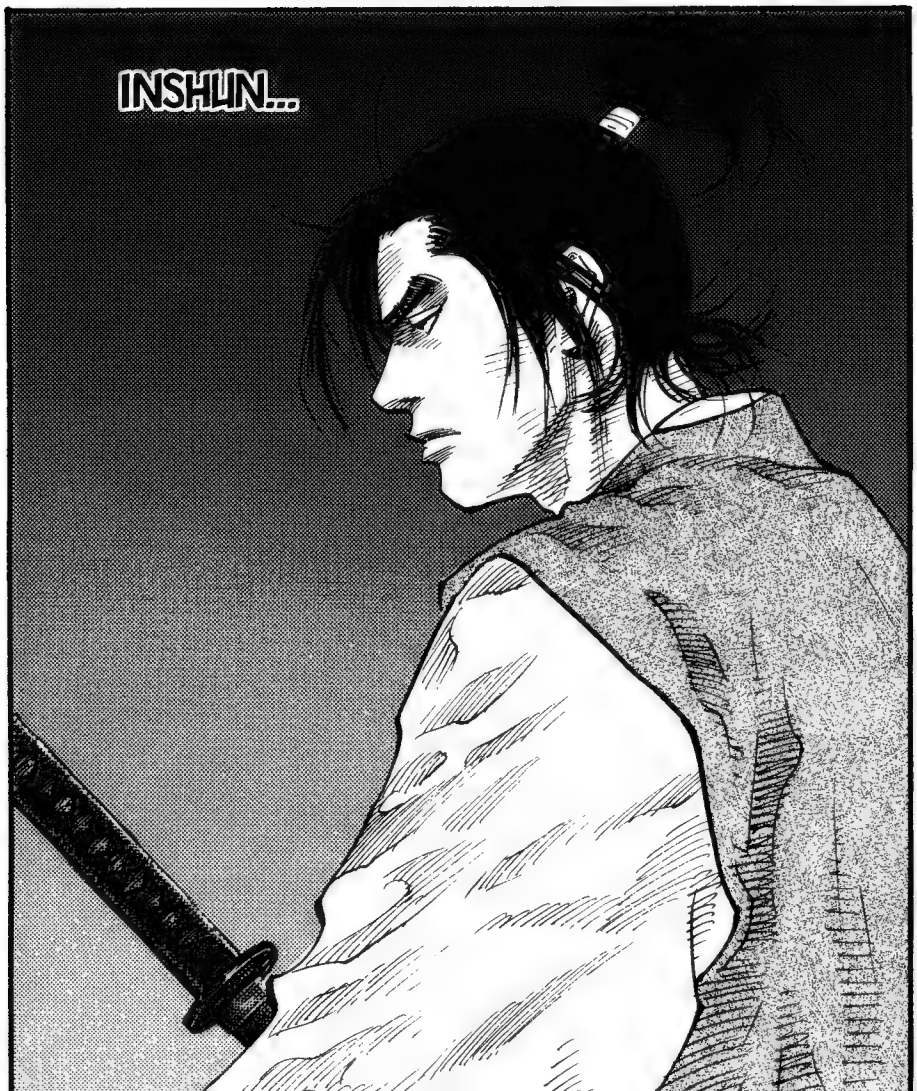

HUH!? WHERE DID GION TŌJI GO?
HE'S GONE!!
GION TŌJI, PLEASE HELP HIM.
THAT BASTARD ESCAPED!!

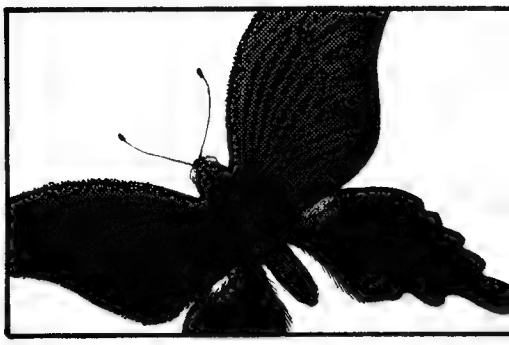

MAYBE HE GOT TIRED OF WAITING.
HE LEFT A SHORT WHILE AGO.


SNIFF
SNIFF
HUF
HUF
HUF
IT'S... UH...TOO LATE.
LET'S GO AFTER HIM.
YEAH.


KRICH
KRICH
...THEY CLEARLY REFLECT HIS FEAR AND UNEASE.
MIYAMOTO'S ATTACKS OF RAGE AND ANGER...
KRICH
AS IF INSHUN IS EMBRACING HIS OPPONENT FOR OFFERING SUCH A GREAT CHALLENGE...
THERE'S NEITHER ANGER NOR HATRED IN INSHUN'S ATTACKS.
IN FACT, HIS ATTACKS ALMOST SEEM FRIENDLY.


SLISH


INSHUN...



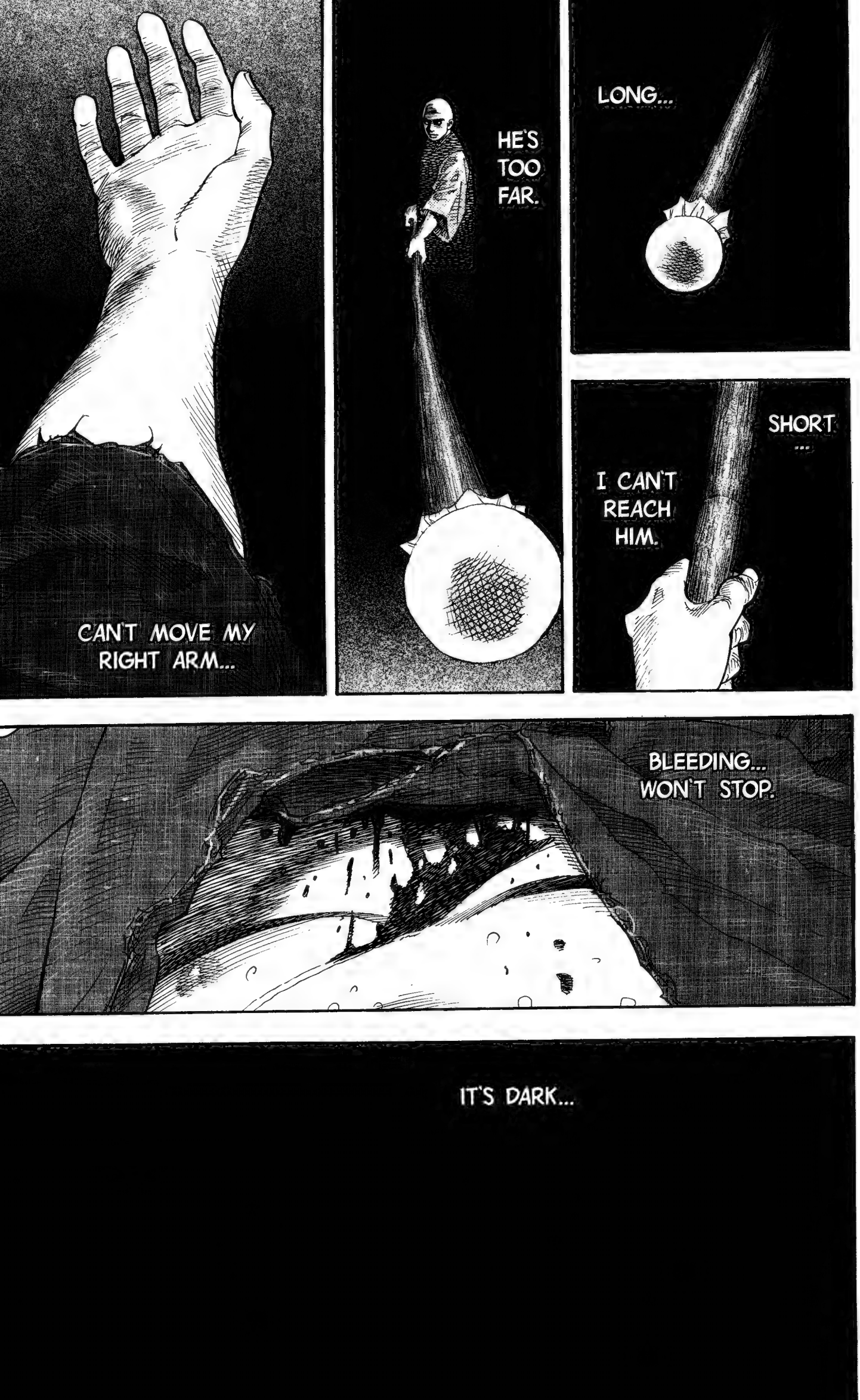



...


MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, CAN YOU SEE ANYTHING BEYOND THIS FIGHT?
HE'S IN A DIFFERENT REALM.
ATTACK!!
ATTACK!!
HUFF!!
ATTACK!!
HUFF!!
HUFF!!


SLISH
JUST KEEP ATTACKING!
HAK
THUMP THUMP
THUMP THUMP
HAK
HAK
THUMP THUMP
HUF
HUF
THUMP THUMP
URGH...
NNGH...
FWOM
ARGH...
NO!!

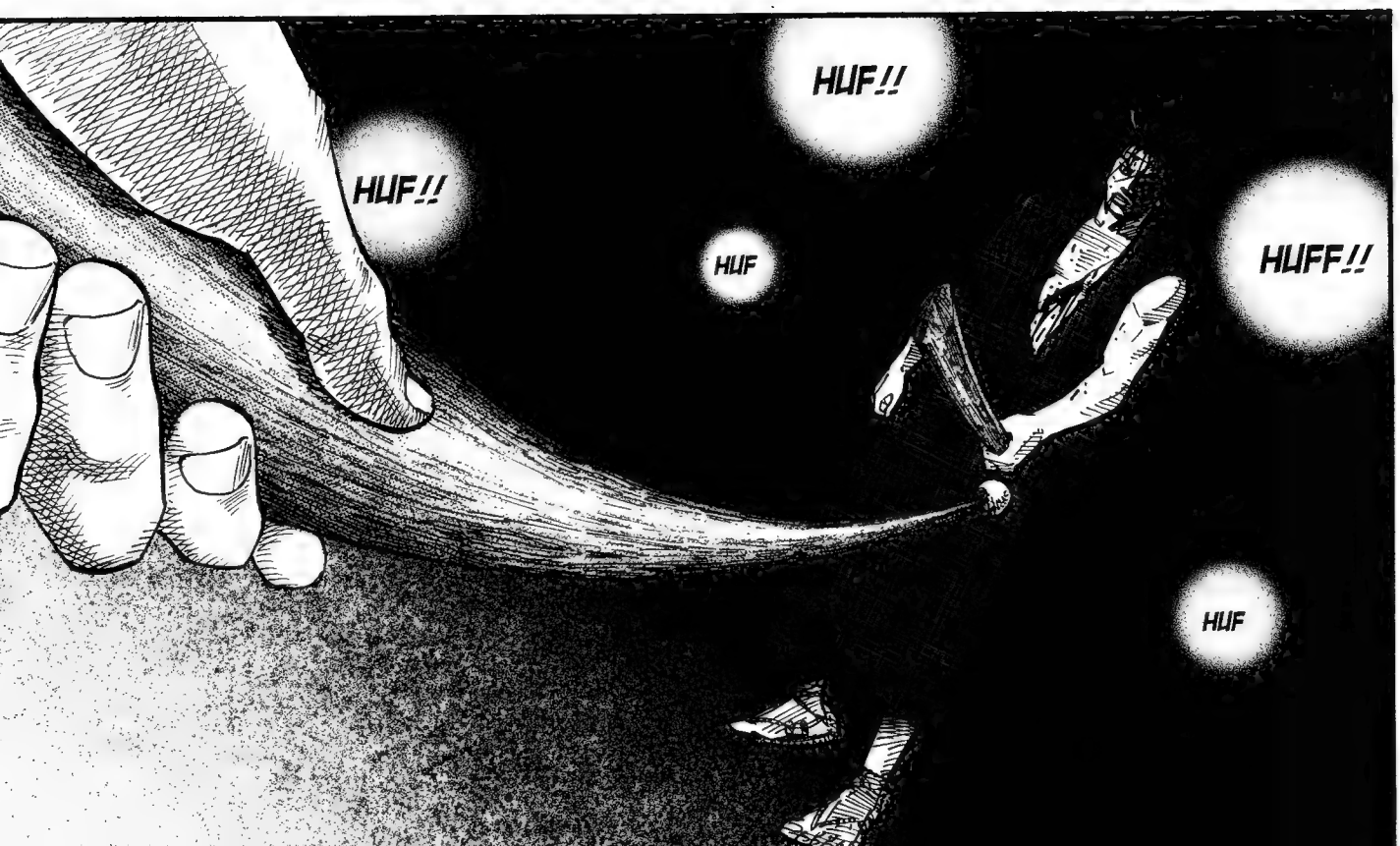

C'MON! LET'S KEEP GOING!
THUMP THUMP
THUMP THUMP

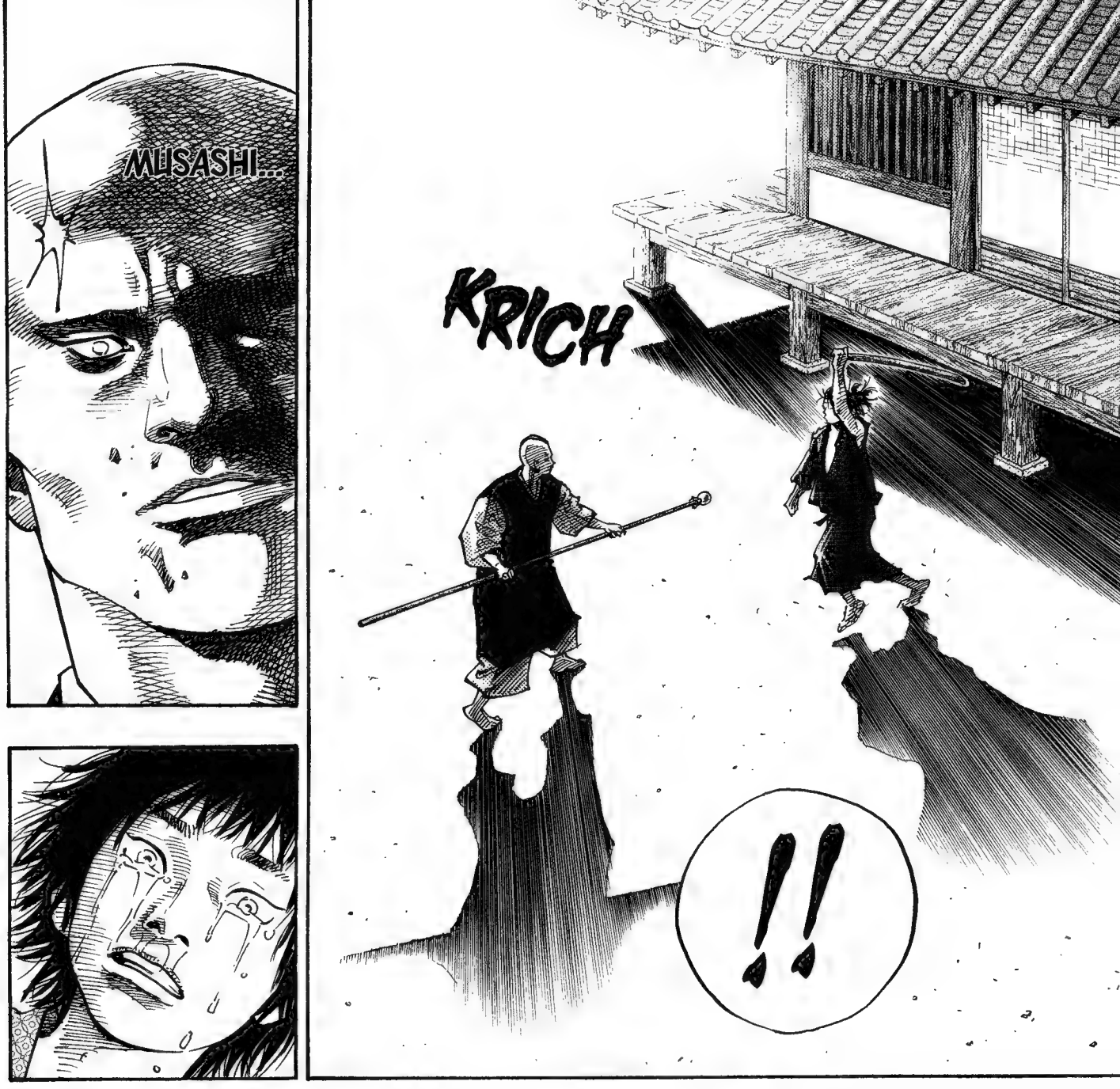

CAN'T MOVE MY RIGHT ARM...
HE'S TOO FAR.
LONG...
I CAN'T REACH HIM.
SHORT...
BLEEDING... WON'T STOP.
IT'S DARK...


MY BODY'S COLD.
#48
Fear II




HE'S GOING TO KILL ME.


HUF!!
HUF!!
HUF
HUFF!!
HUF


MUSASHI...
KRICH
!!




HE'S DEAD...
KLAK

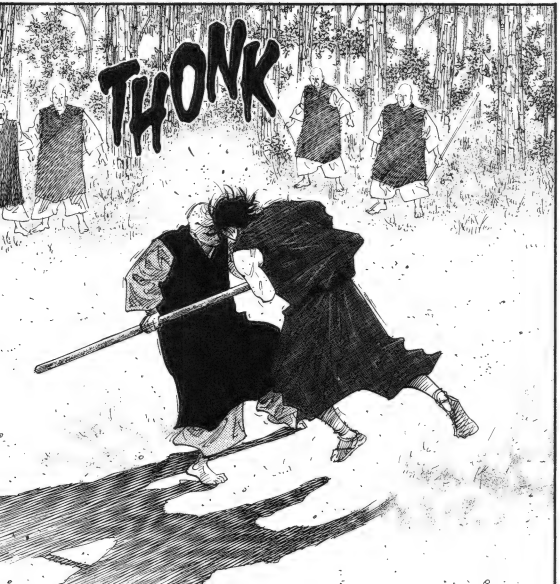

ТИШ






TUGG
!!


!!


THONK


KRRSH


PLISH


FWISSH
!!
KRICH

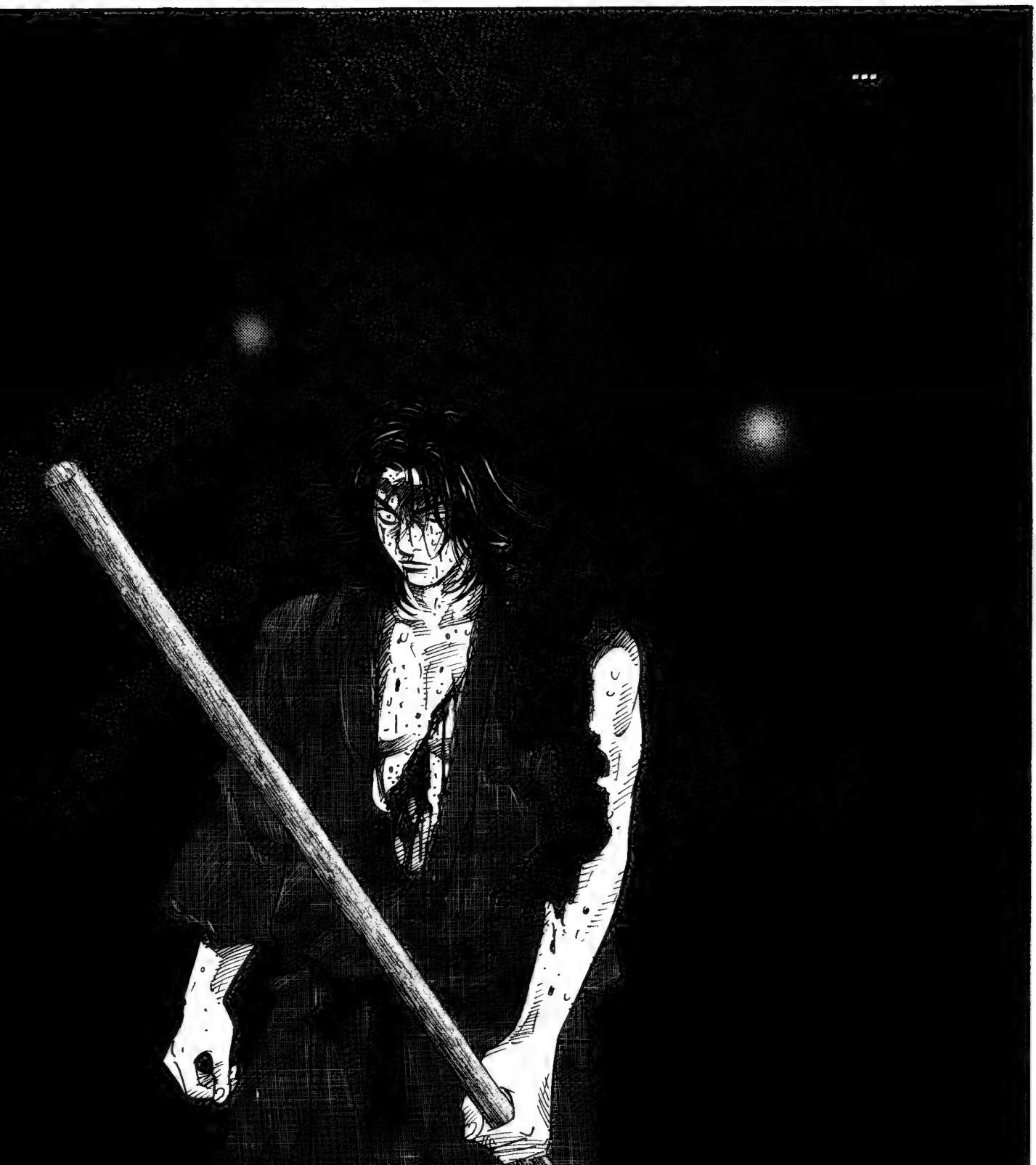

FWOOSH
!!


THOK
!!
WHUD
!!
HAKK


IT'S OVER!
YOUR TIME'S COME!!
FWISH


AIEEE!
FWISH
HUF!
HUF!
FWINCH
ARGHH!
KRRCH
ARGH!
HUF!
HUF!
HUF!


HUF
...
HUF
HUF


...


YAAHH!


FWIP


KRAKK
YAH!
FWAK
!!


HUF
NNGH...
HUF
KOF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
NUUU...


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
KOF


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF



#49|Fear III


FIPP


DIE!


THWAK


HUF
HUF
HAH


YES!!
KEEP COMING AT ME!!


FWOOSH
YAHHH!
!!
KRICH
UNGH!
GASP!


KWOOSH
!!
HMPH...
WH-
WHAT
STRENGTH!
AND
HE CAN
BARELY
STAND!!
USING
HIS LEFT
ARM...
FWOOSH
ARGH!
FWOOSH

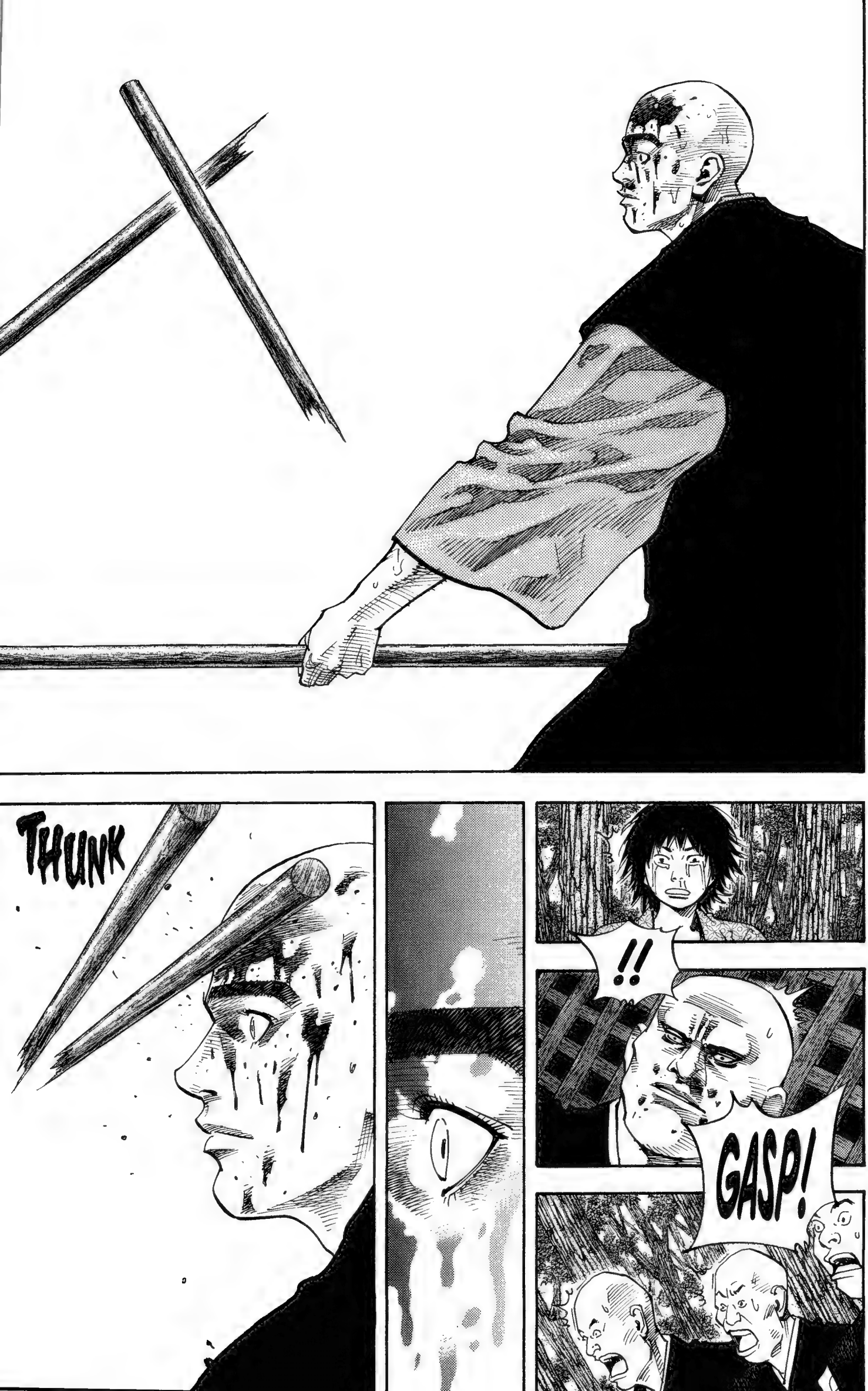

HIS BLOOD THIRST IS BEYOND BELIEF.
FWOOSH


I UNDER-
STAND
NOW...




KRICH


ONE OF
US HAS
TO DIE.


THUNK
!!
GASP!


THE
FINAL
FLAME...


BE CALM.
STAY IN CONTROL.


TUNK

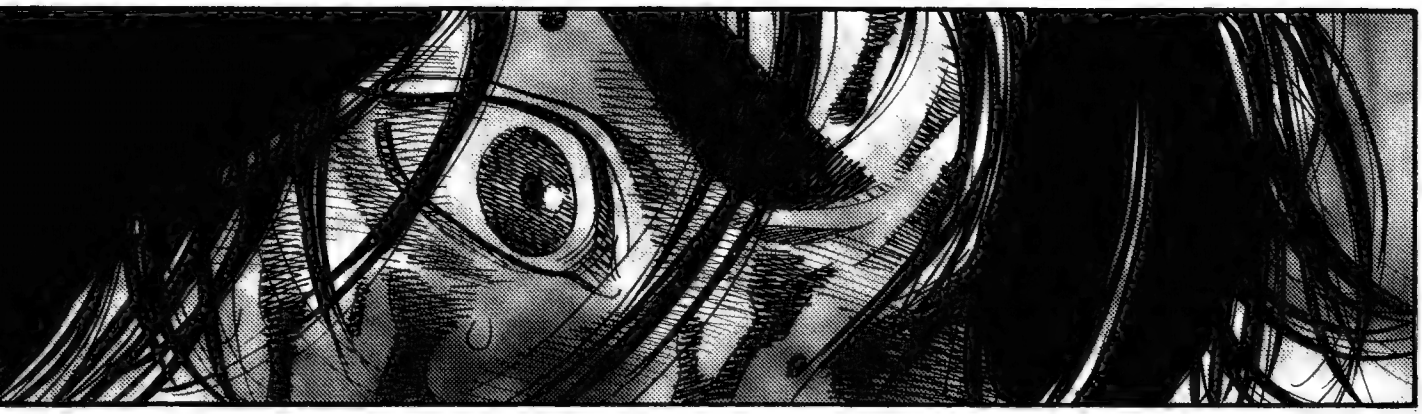

!!
THIS BATTLE OF LIFE AND DEATH...
THIS EXPERIENCE WILL MAKE ME INVINCIBLE.


Fwoosh


RELAX.




FWOOSH

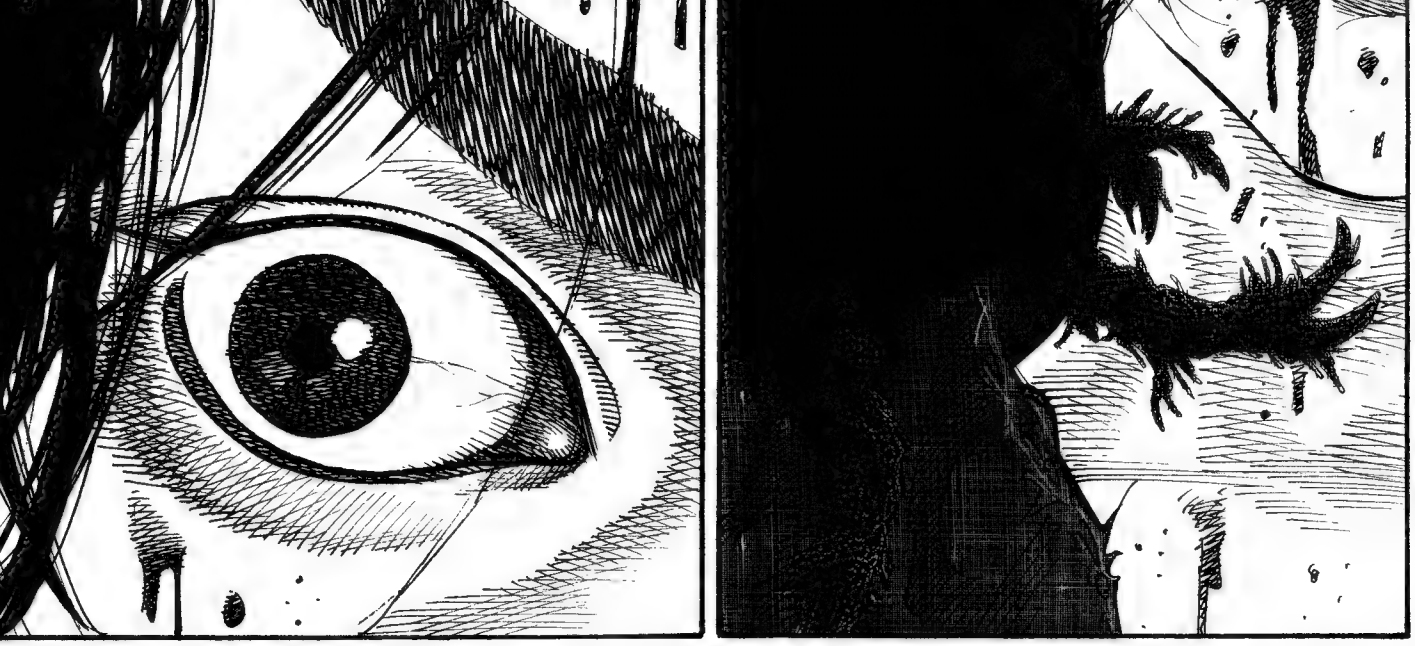


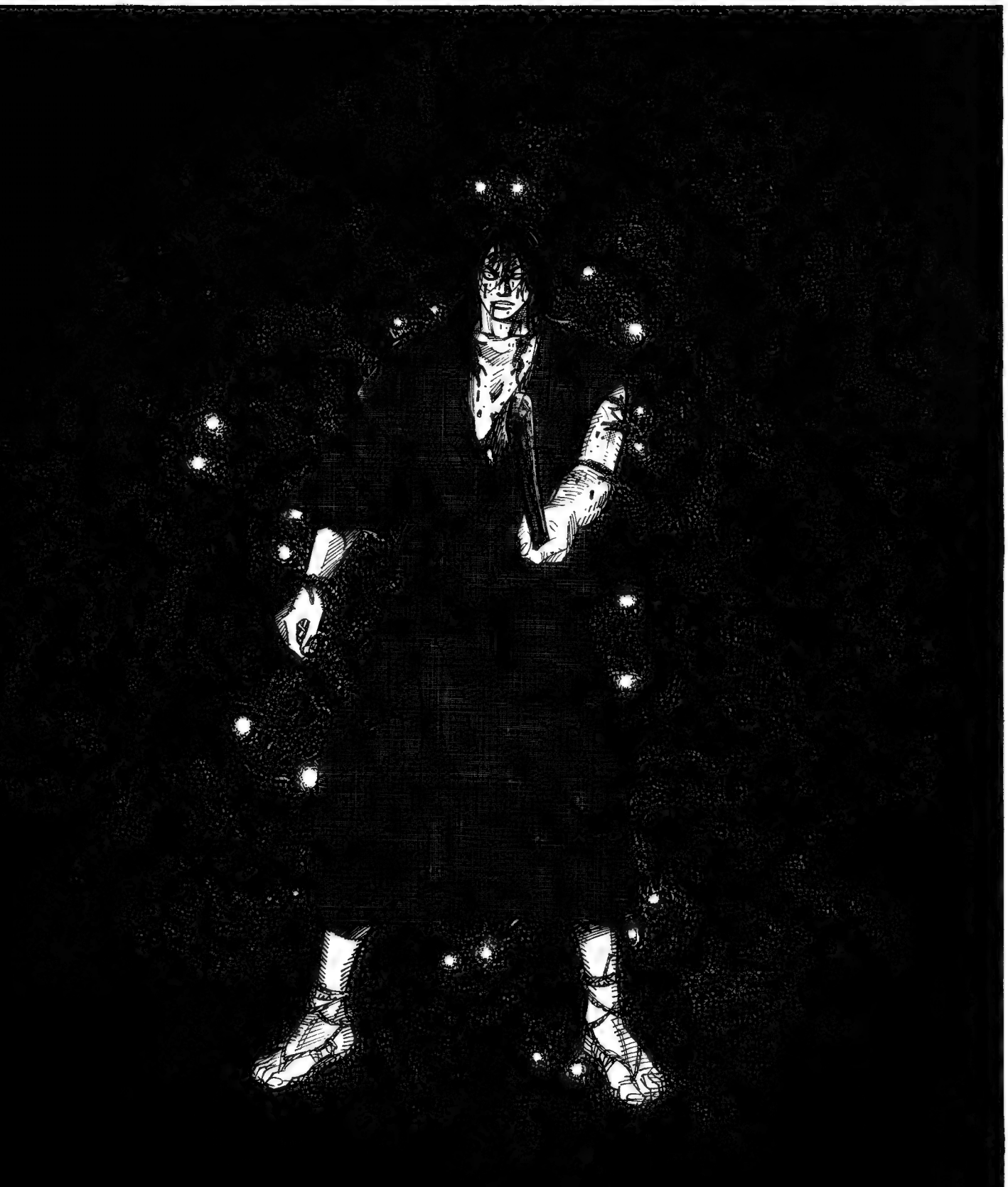

PATIENCE.




DON'T
HESITATE.








YAHHHH!!
FWOOSH
THUP


KRICH
FWUMP
FWISH


THUMP
THMP


THUMP
THMP


THUMP
THMP




THANK YOU, MUSASHI...
THANK YOU FOR TEACHING ME ABOUT LIFE...





End of volume 5


SCANNED BY :
. DEMETTER
. SUPERJOE
EDITED BY :
. PHANTOM GREYFIRE
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Vagabond
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THE YAGYŪ...


#50 Surviving
Vagabond
vol. 6


I AM YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ, THE YOUNGEST SON OF YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ OF THE EIGHT KYOTO STYLES.
I SEEK A LESSON FROM MASTER YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI.

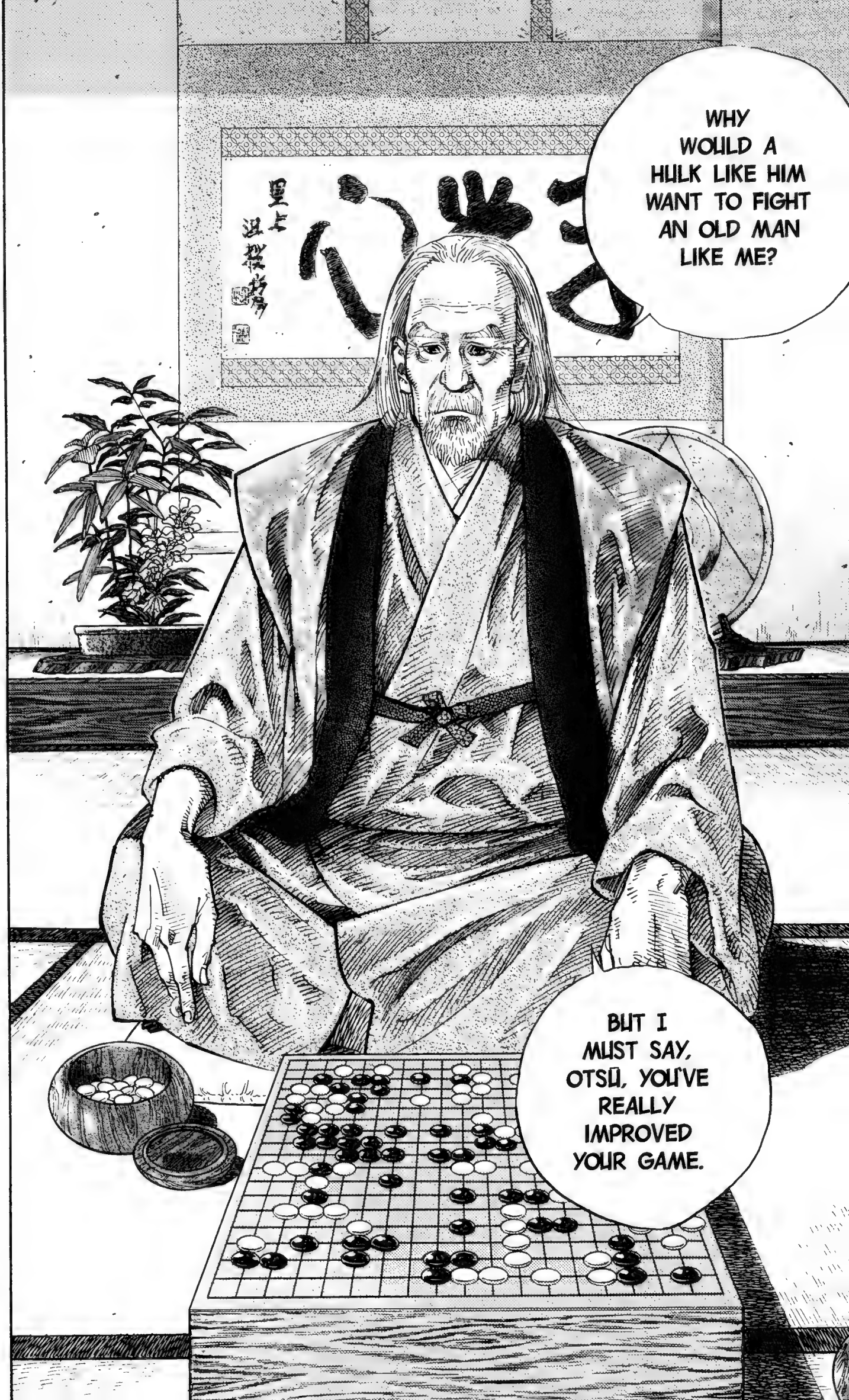

...


SHE'S BEAUTIFUL.


SO YOSHIOKA'S SON IS STILL HERE?


...


YES...


WHY WOULD A HULK LIKE HIM WANT TO FIGHT AN OLD MAN LIKE ME?
BUT I MUST SAY, OTSŪ, YOU'VE REALLY IMPROVED YOUR GAME.


SMIRK
GASP!
KLIK
...
HEY!
FWOOP
YOU'RE SO CHILDISH!!
LOSER?
?
OOPS.
YOU'RE SUCH A SORE LOSER!!


HUF
UNGH...
THUMP
THMP
HUF
HUF
HUF
THUMP
THMP
HUF
URGH...
KRRNCH
KRRNCH
ARGH
URGH
HUF
HUF


THUMP
THMP
NNGH...
NNGH...
THUMP
THMP
HUF
HUF
THUMP
THMP
AARGH...
HUF
HUF
HUF


!!
HUF
HUF
...
HUF
HUF
MAYBE HE WAS THERE...
HOW DID I END UP HERE...?
I CAN ONLY REMEMBER FRAGMENTS...
...OF THE FIGHT.
WHERE'S JŌTARŌ ...?
HOW DID I SURVIVE...?
WHAT HAPPENED...?
HE FOLLOWED YOU TO THE DUEL AND HASN'T BEEN BACK SINCE.


THANK YOU, MUSASHI...
...FOR TEACHING ME ABOUT LIFE...


!!




JŌTA...
HUF
HUF
HUF




HUF
HUF
HUFF
HUFF

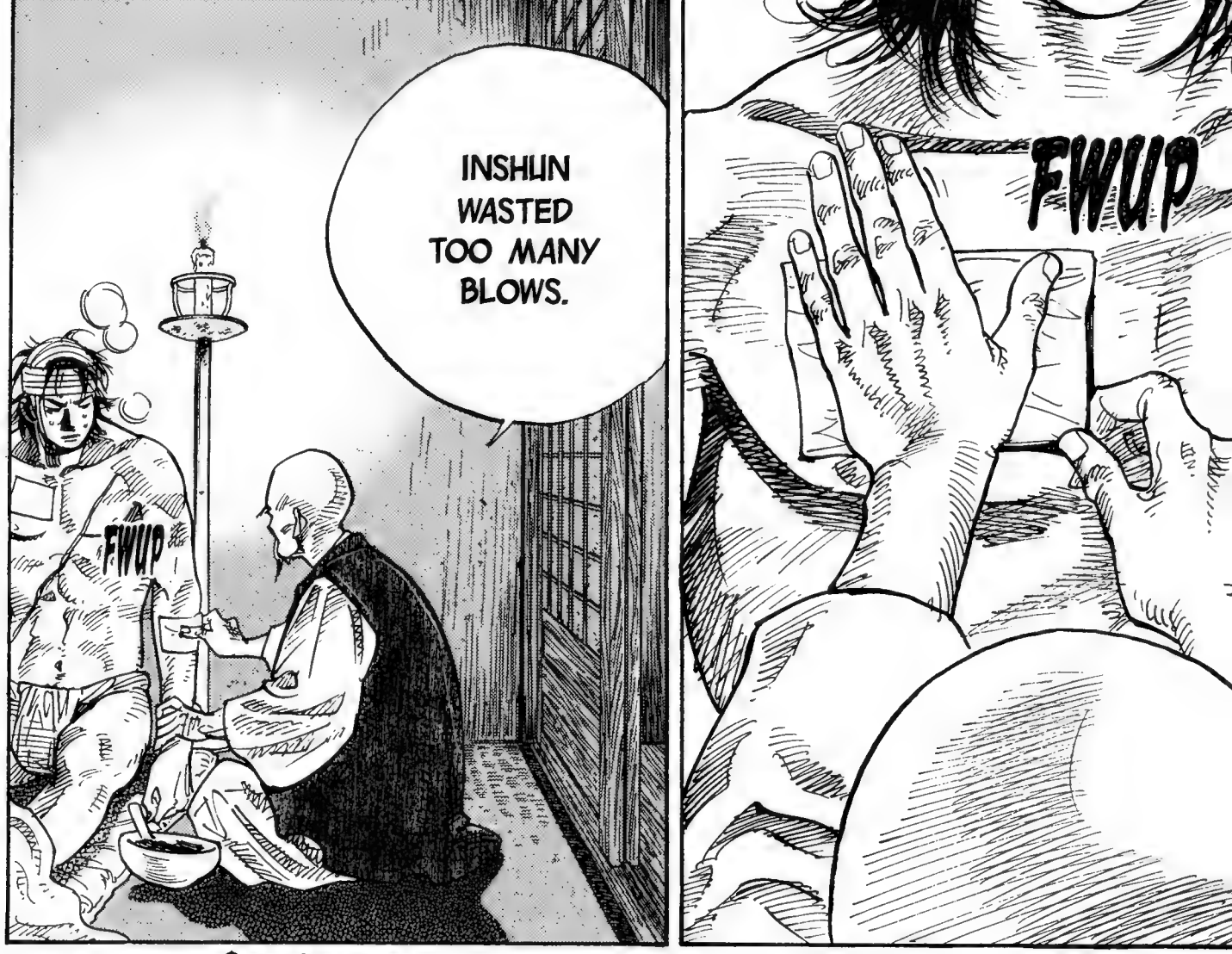

FORTUNATELY, YOU SURVIVED...
WELL...
...MAYBE IT WASN'T SO FORTUNATE.
MY APPRENTICESHIP TO YOU WAS BRIEF...
...MASTER...
...NO...
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
I DON'T WANT TO LEARN FROM YOU ANYMORE...
I DON'T NEED TO LEARN HOW TO RUN AWAY FROM A FIGHT.


THUMP
THMP
HUF
THUMP
THMP
HUF
HUF
THUMP
THMP
HUF
HUF
AARGH!

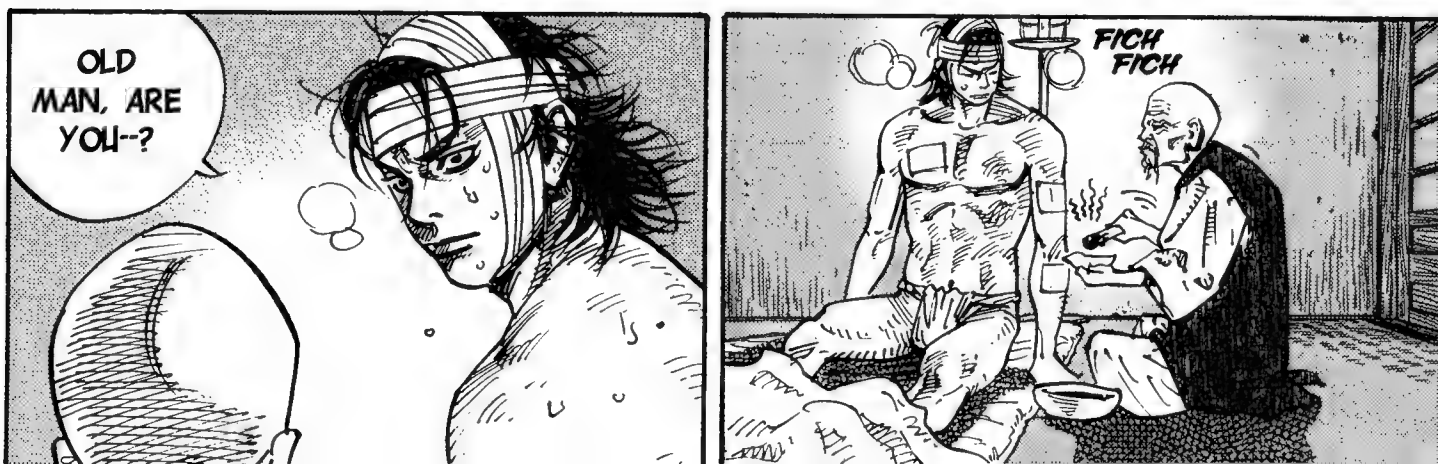

KLAK
THWUNK!
NNGH!
KOF
HUF
HUFF
KRICH
FWISH
YAHH!
HUF
ARGH!!
THUMP
THMP
...
HUF
THUMP
THMP
HUF

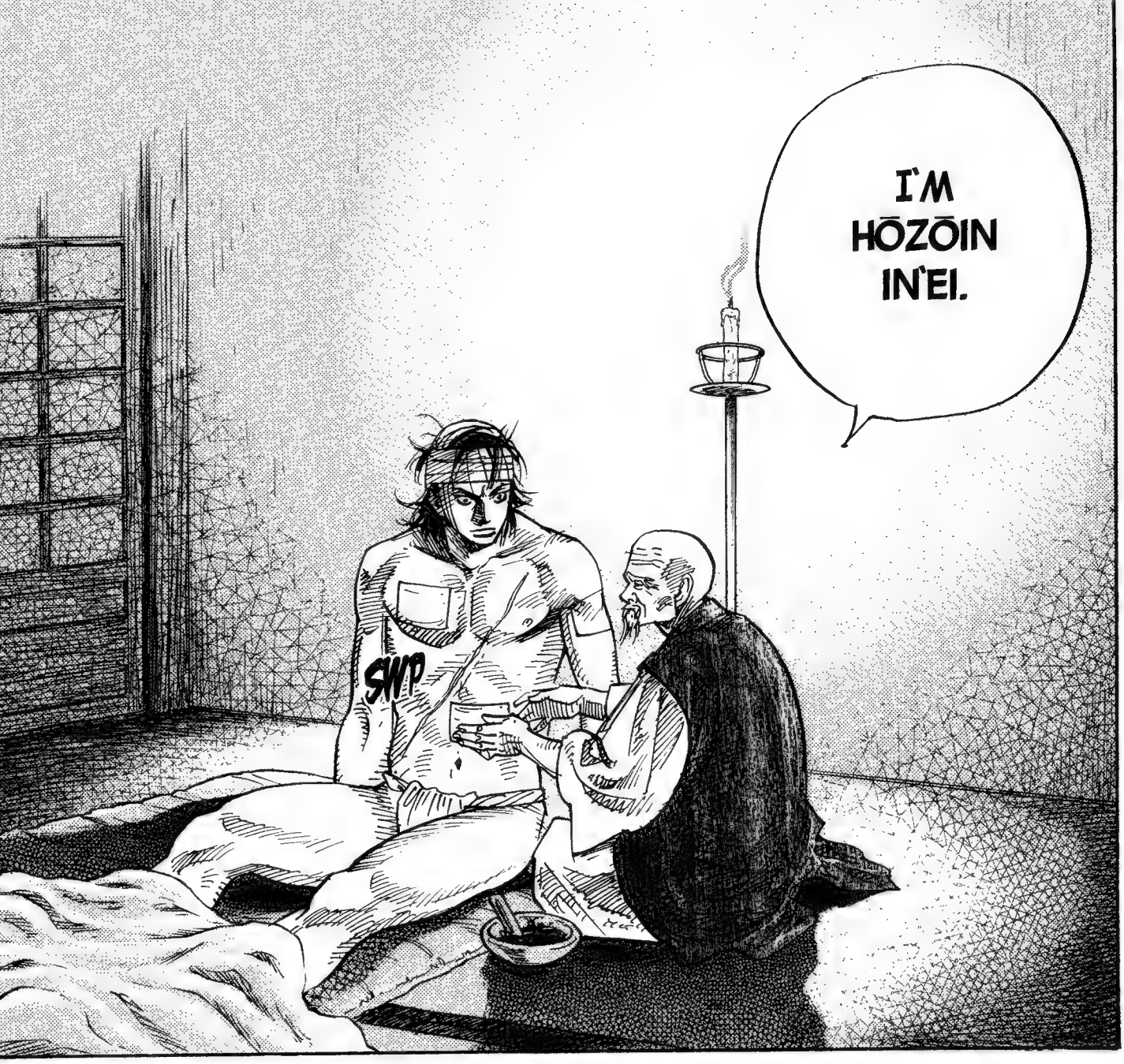

HUF
HUF
KRICH
FWICH
ARGH!
YAHH!
HUF
HUF
HUF
THOK
!!
FWOOSH
YAHH!
ARGH!
FOOSH

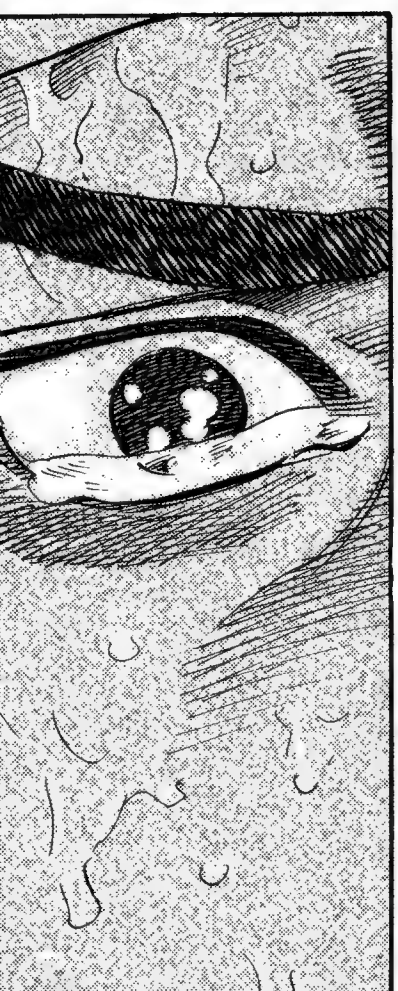

FWICH
YUCK!
IT'S READY!
SNIF SNIF


INSHUN WASTED TOO MANY BLOWS.
FWUP
FWUP


SHWIP
IF HE HAD TO HIT YOU SO MANY TIMES...
...HE'S STILL GOT A LONG WAY TO GO.


OLD MAN, ARE YOU--?
FICH FICH


I'M HŌZŌIN IN'EI.
SNIP




HMM...




I'M NOTHING.
I AM SO SMALL.

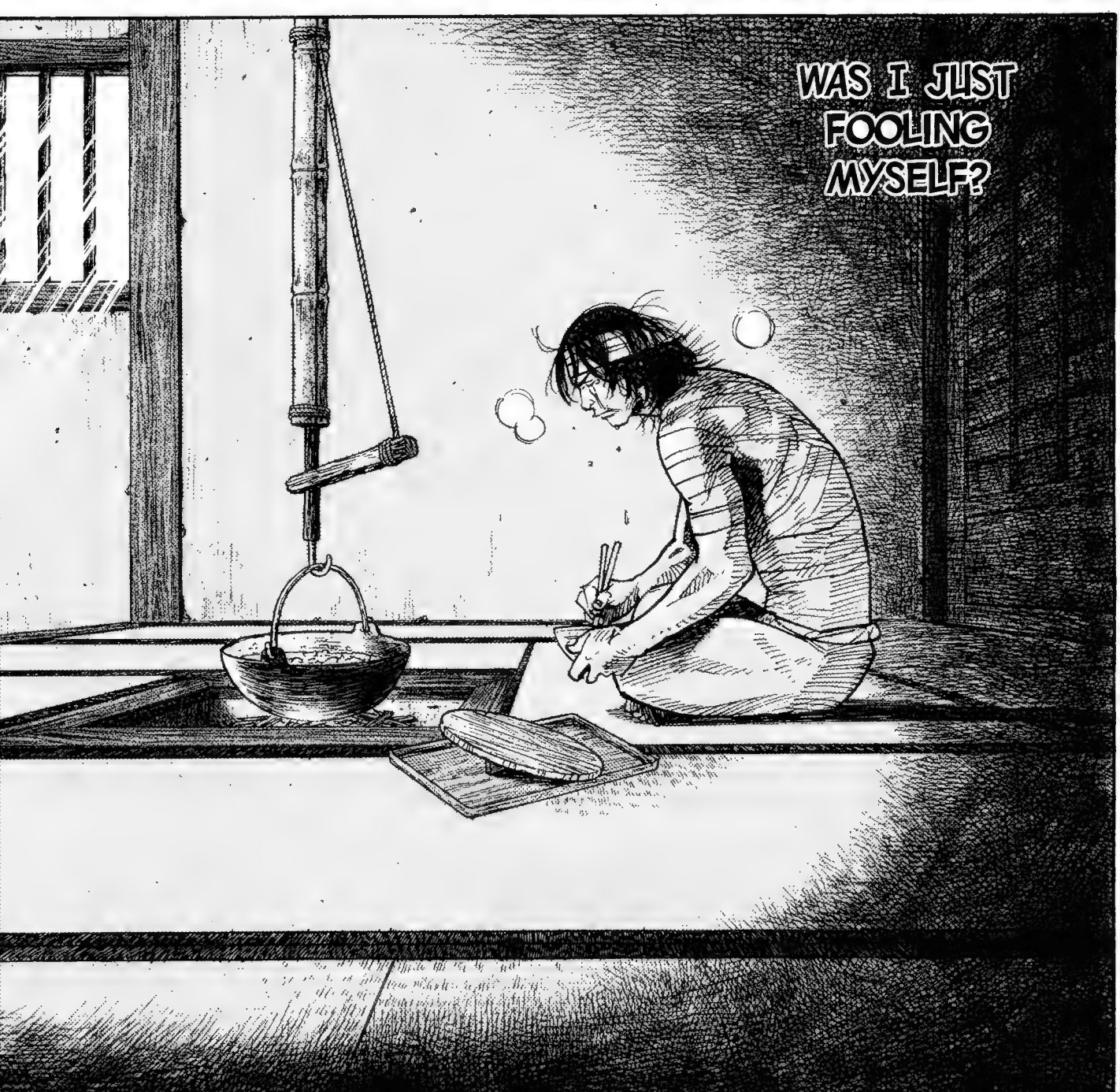

I AM INVINCIBLE!!
I COULD KILL YOU WITH THIS STICK.
THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN...
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE AS STRONG AS HŌZŌIN IN'EI?
I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU.



#51 Lying Low


...
FWSH
HUF
HUF
HUF
MNCH
MNCH
MNCH
KTNK
...
HUF
HUF
HUF


SNIF
"I AM STRONG."


WAS I JUST FOOLING MYSELF?

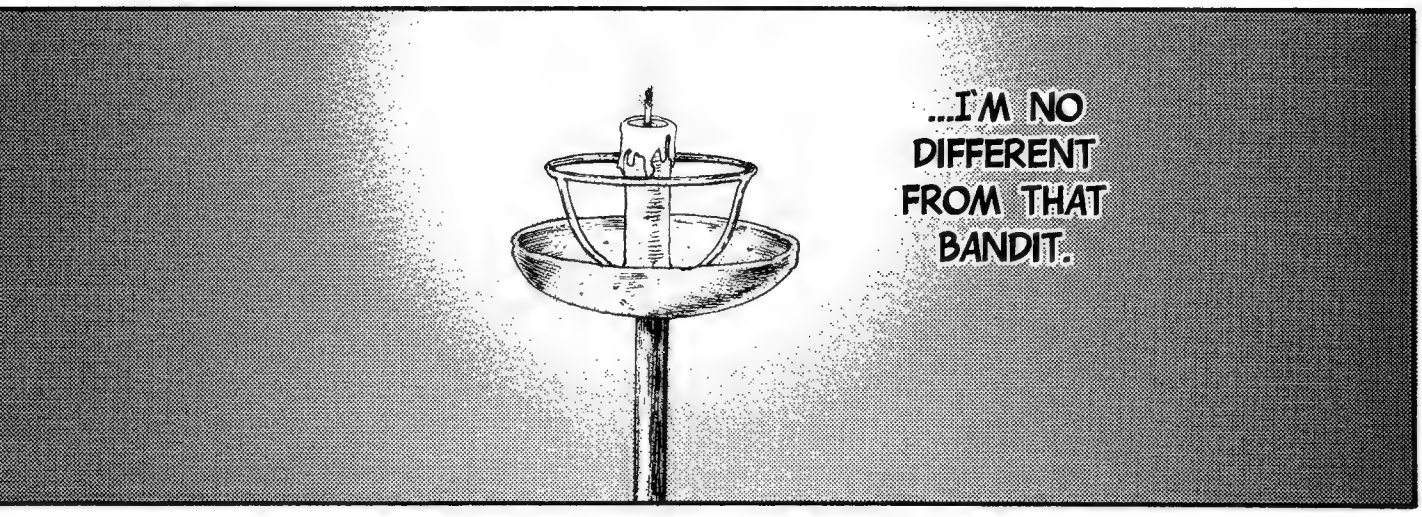

MY "STRENGTH"...
WAS IT JUST AN
ILLUSION?




HUF
HUF


I
WASN'T
READY
TO DIE.


HUF
HUF
HUF
I'M ACTING THE SAME WAY...


...I'M NO DIFFERENT FROM THAT BANDIT.


I HAVEN'T MADE ANY PROGRESS AT ALL.


KRNCH
KRNCH
...




YOU'RE HŌZŌIN IN'EI...
INSHUN'S MASTER.
THEREFORE, I'M YOUR ENEMY...BUT HERE YOU ARE...


EH?
SHWEP


I DON'T GET IT...


HMM...
I WONDER WHETHER ONE COULD EVEN CONSIDER YOU AN ENEMY...
HMPH...
FWUP
HRMPH.


THAT'S TRUE. I DIDN'T EVEN GET ONE BLOW IN.

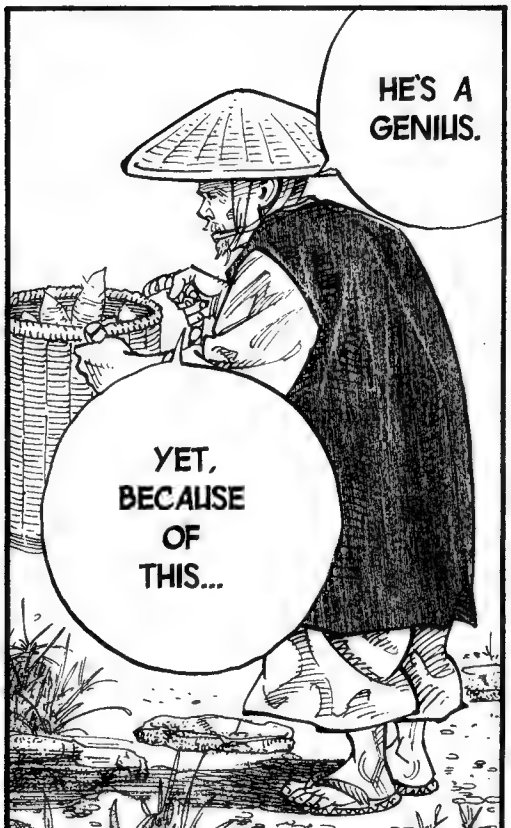

NONE WHO HAVE FACED HIM HAVE EVER BEEN A THREAT TO HIS LIFE.
HRMPH
THIS IS THE FINAL DILEMMA THAT MY DISCIPLE INSHUN MUST OVERCOME.

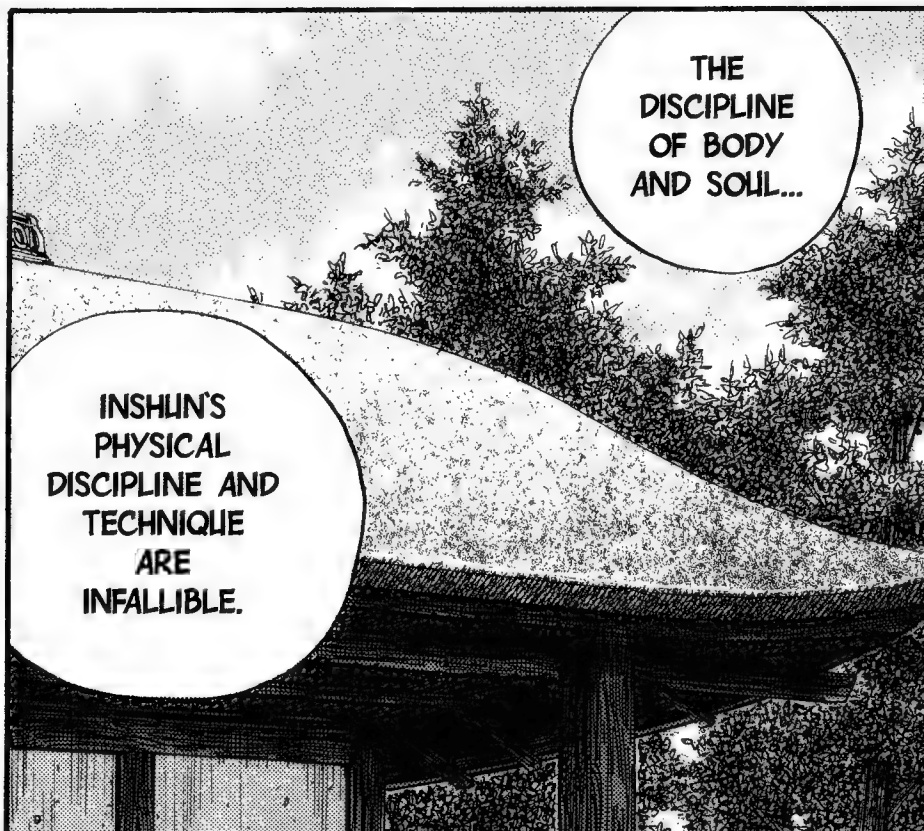


HAVING SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS, MUSASHI'S TOUGH BODY RECOVERED QUICKLY.



BUT AS HIS WOUNDS HEALED, HE GREW MORE AND MORE DISAPPOINTED WITH HIMSELF.

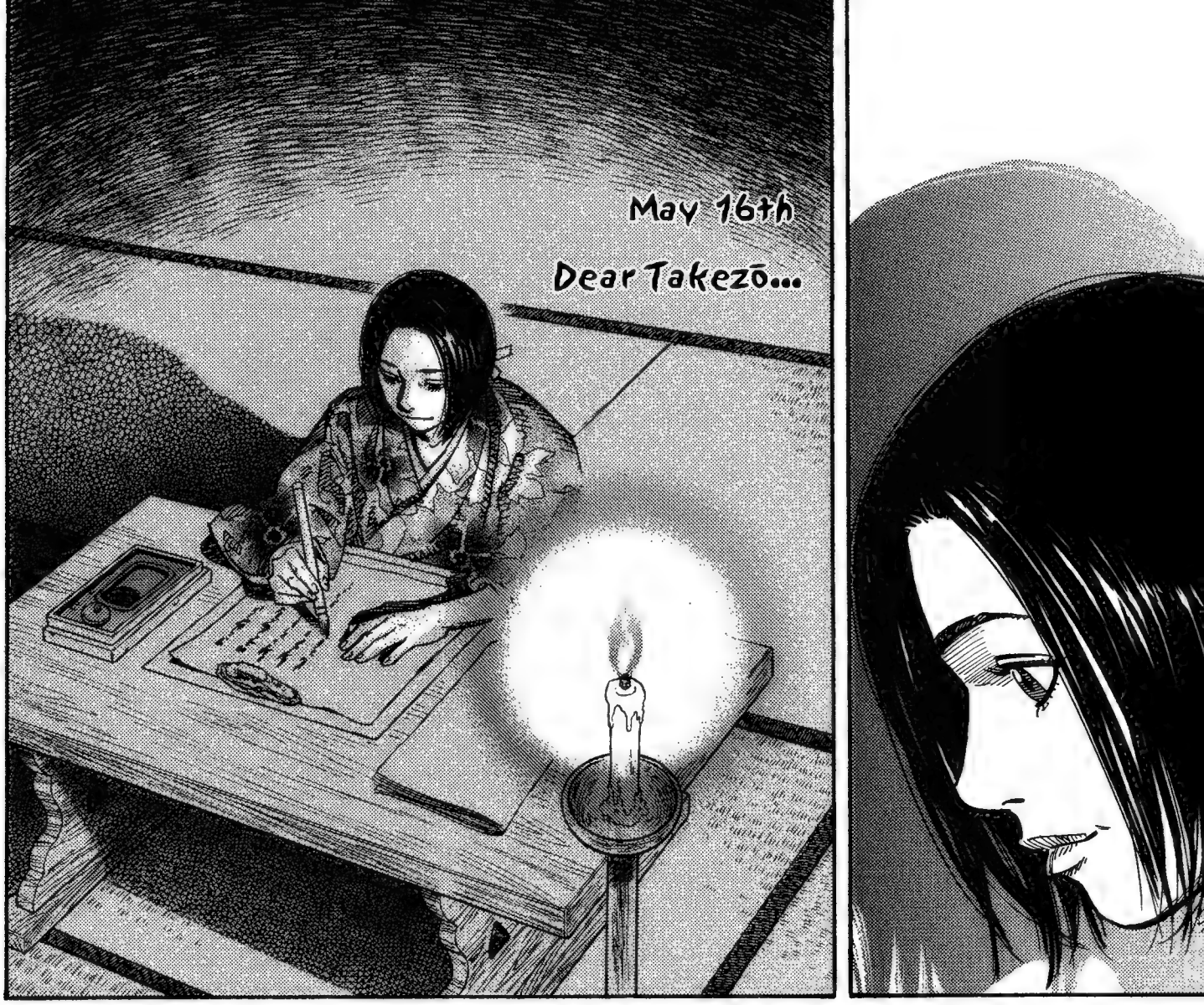





HE KNOWS NOT THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SOUL.
...
SHLRP
MNCH
MNCH
MNCH


OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES...
...AND AT TIMES EVEN RISKING ONE'S LIFE...
...THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT ALLOW THE SOUL TO GROW AND MATURE...
KOFF!
HAK!
KOFF!
...!!
INSHUN REALIZES THIS...
BUT BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT GENIUS...
...ONLY INSHUN'S OPPONENTS' LIVES ARE EVER AT RISK.
HRMPH
URGH...
TAKE IT EASY.
YOUR WOUNDS HAVEN'T HEALED YET.

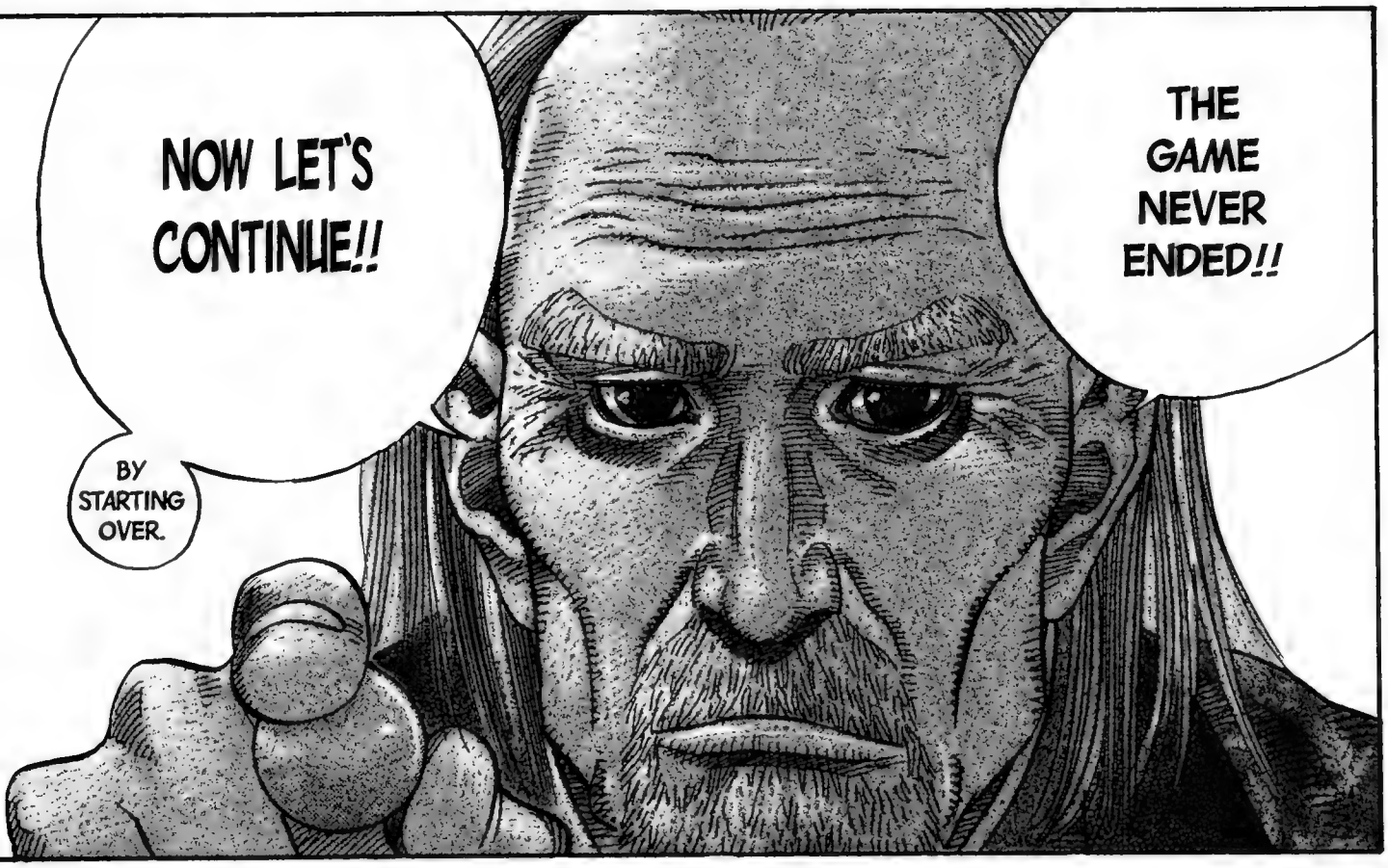

THUMP THMP
HUF
THUMP THMP
HUF
THUMP THMP
HUF
INSHUN...!!

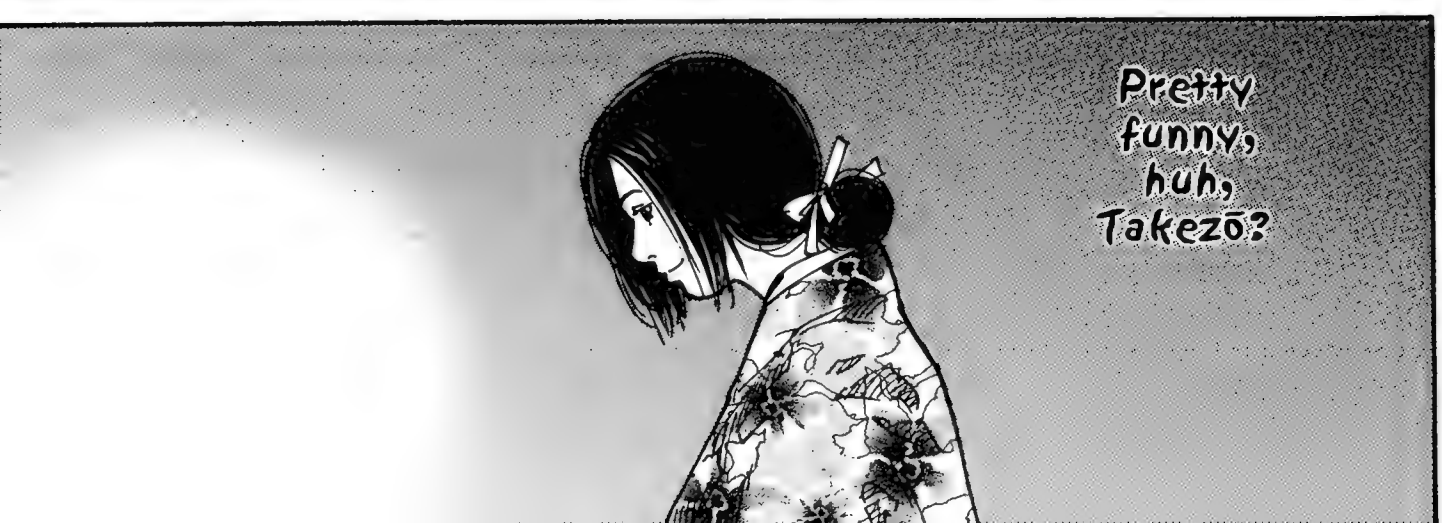

May 16th
Dear Takezō...

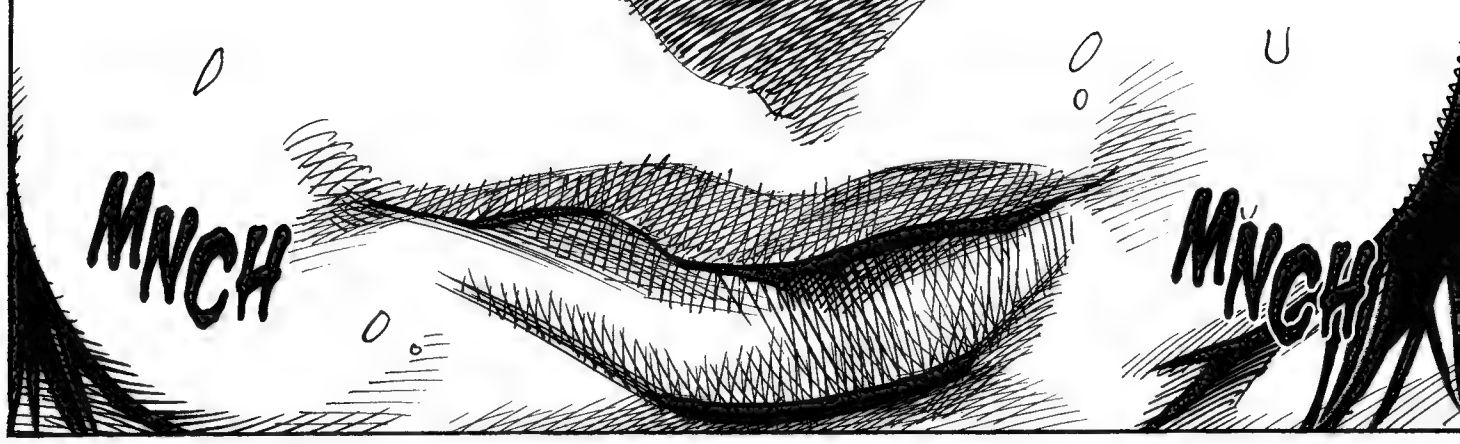

Everyone knows the great Yagyū Sekishūsai Muneyoshi of the Shinkage Style of swordsmanship.


The truth is he's very childish and a real sore loser.


CONTINUE? ...BUT YOU LOST, SIR!
NO, I DIDN'T.
OH, YES YOU DID!
SHALL WE CONTINUE OUR GAME FROM YESTERDAY?
YES?
OTSŪ...

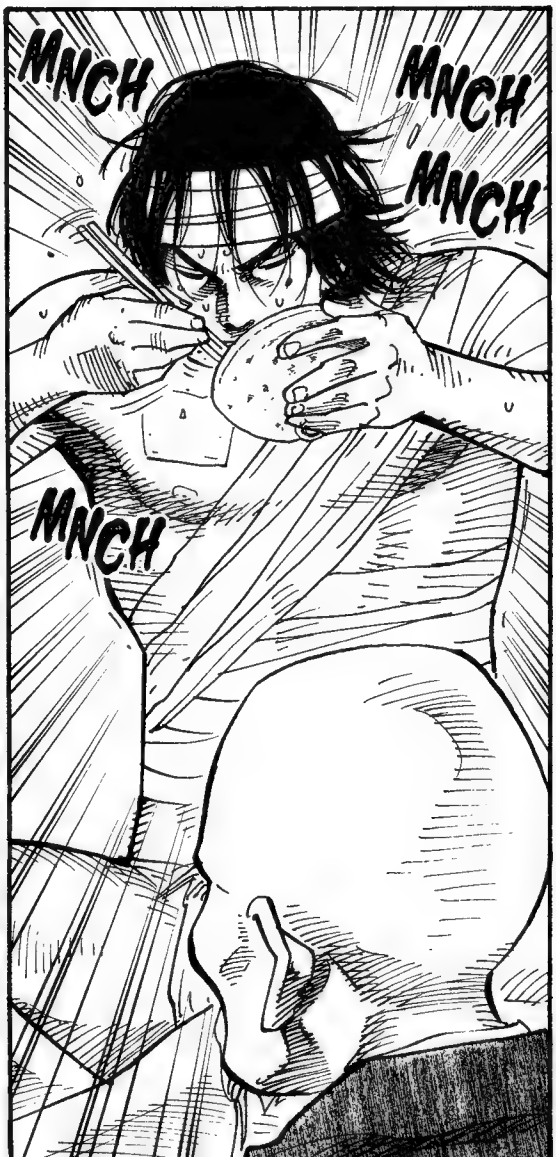

NOW LET'S CONTINUE!!
BY STARTING OVER.
THE GAME NEVER ENDED!!

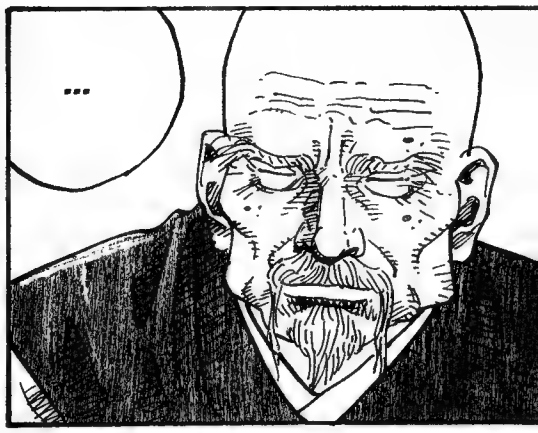

Pretty funny, huh, Takezō?


MNCH
MNCH


MNCH
MNCH
MNCH
KRRNCH



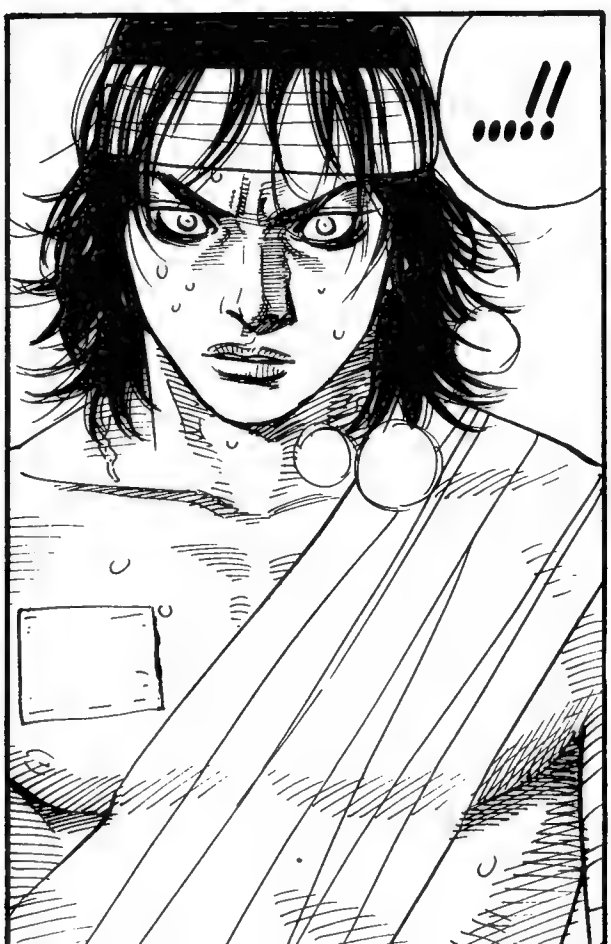

MNCH
MNCH
MNCH
MNCH


...


WANT MORE?
YES, PLEASE.


NO MATTER HOW STRONG YOU ARE, A FIGHT TO THE DEATH IS A TERRIFYING ORDEAL.
EVEN FOR ME.

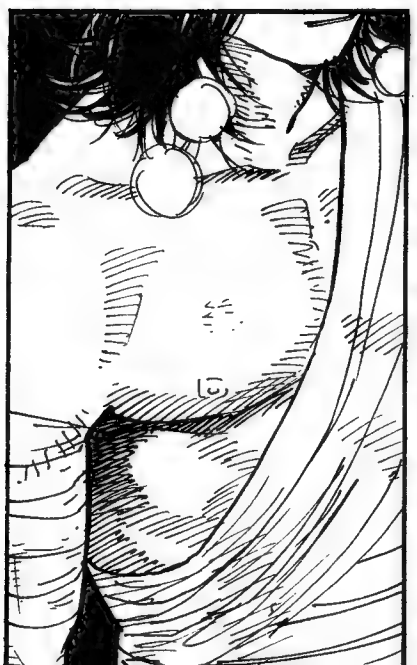

...AND KEEP IT AT BAY.
BUT THERE IS A WAY TO FACE THAT FEAR...
KRICH
HRMPH.

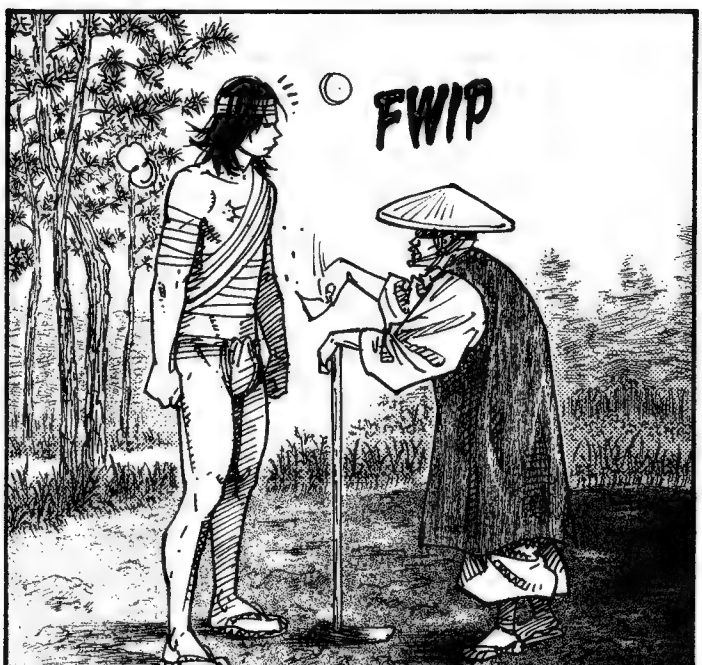

...!!

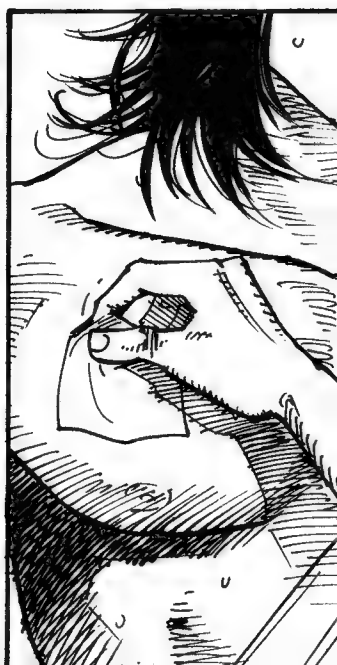

BUT ONLY THE TRULY STRONG CAN SUCCEED IN DOING SO.
HRMPH


INSHLIN HAS NEVER KNOWN "FEAR."
SO HE STILL HAS MUCH TO LEARN...






FWIP




MUSASHI ...
THE YOUNG HEAL SO QUICKLY...
WILL *YOU* TEACH INSHUN THE *MEANING* OF "FEAR"...?

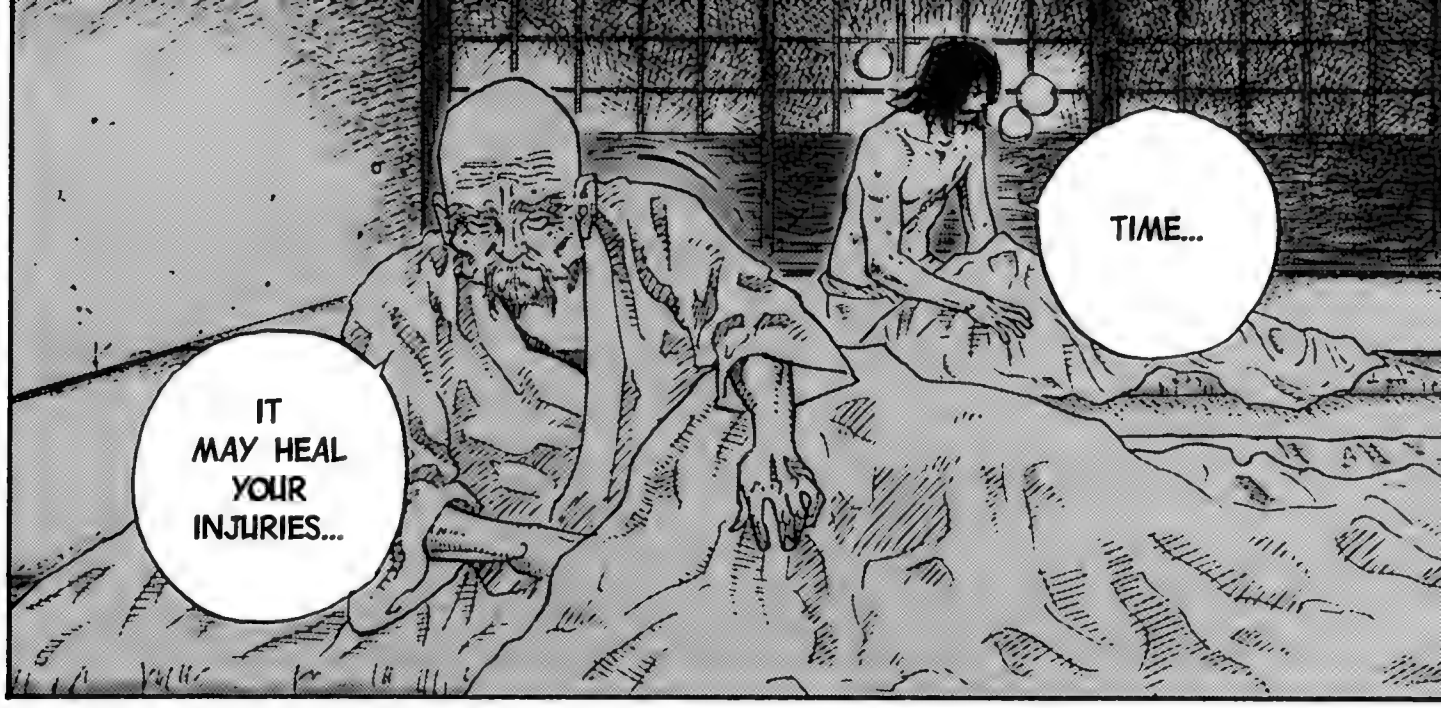

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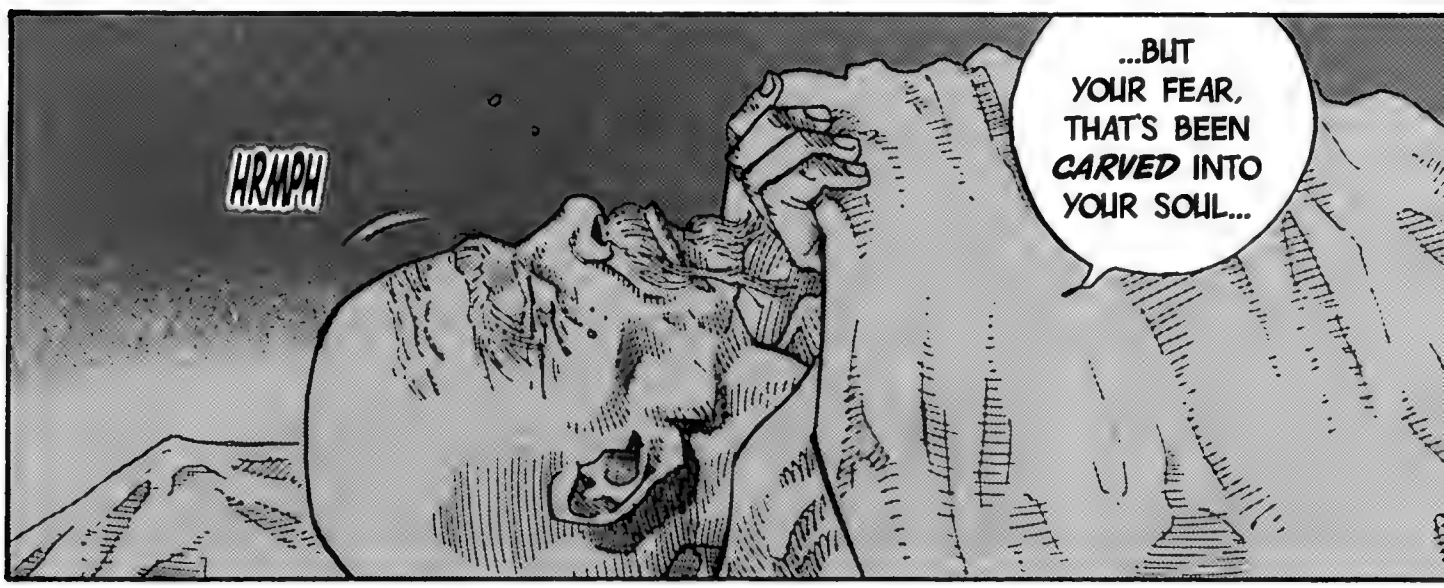

IF IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR ME TO KILL HIM.

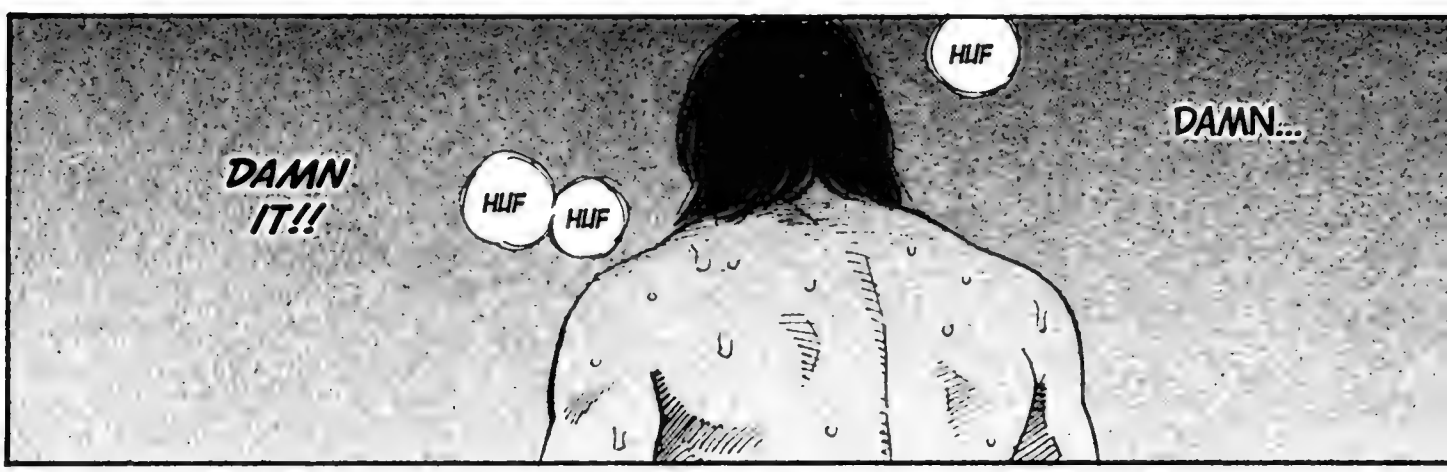

Vagabond


(GOOD NIGHT, TAKEZŌ.)

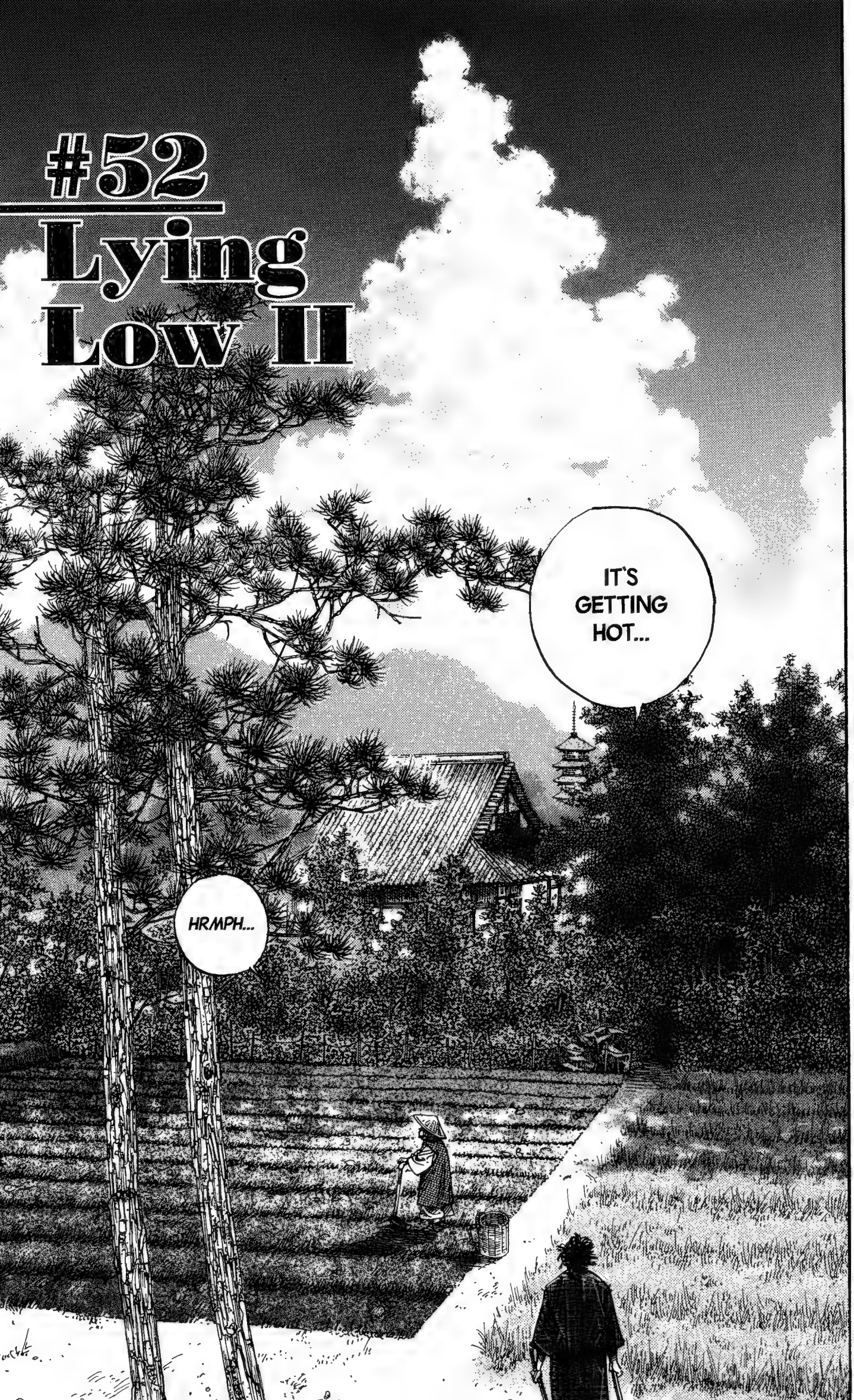

NNGH...
ARGH...
FWOOSH
AHH!!
THMP THMP
THMP THMP
THMP THMP
...

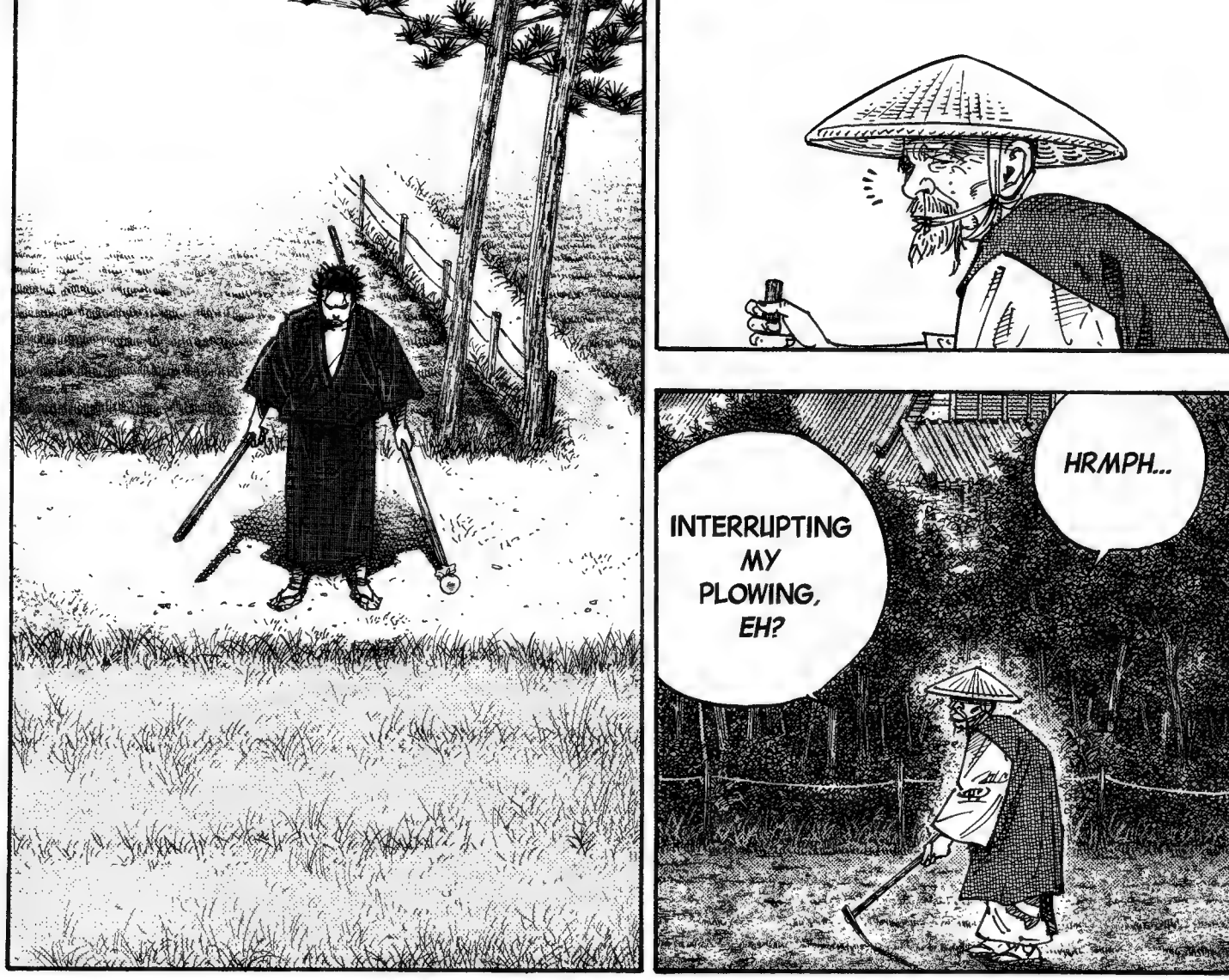

TIME...
IT MAY HEAL YOUR INJURIES...


...BUT YOUR FEAR, THAT'S BEEN *CARVED* INTO YOUR SOUL...
HRMPH


HUF
DAMN...
DAMN IT!!
HUF
HUF




#52
Lying Low II
IT'S GETTING HOT...
HRMPH...

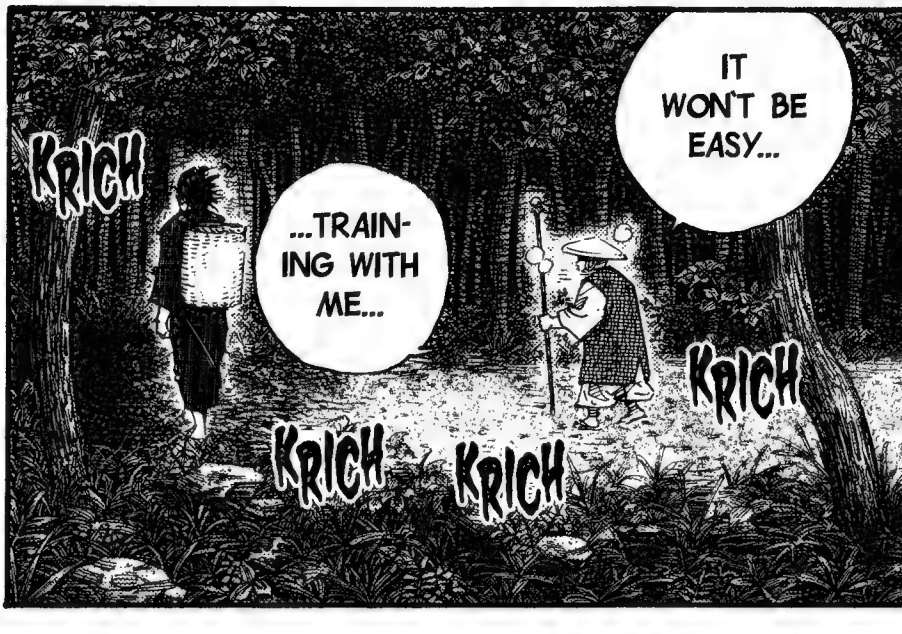

HRMPH...
INTERRUPTING MY PLOWING, EH?


MASTER IN'EI...
PLEASE, YOU MUST TRAIN ME!


THERE'S NO WAY I CAN JUST LET IT GO.
NO WAY!
INSHUN GAVE ME SUCH A BEATING...
I CAN'T LET IT END LIKE THIS.
YOU USUALLY CALL ME "OLD MAN" ...
...
WHAT'S THIS "MASTER" BUSINESS?
MASTER IN'EI!!
HRMPH
PLEASE, OLD MAN!!
HMM...




PHEW...
GETTING TIRED.
...


KRICH
...TRAIN-ING WITH ME...
IT WON'T BE EASY...
KRICH
KRICH
KRICH
KRICH


HMPH...
THE TOUGHER THE TRAINING, THE BETTER!
KRICH
KRICH


KRICH
KRICH


FSSSSH!

FSSSH!


IF YOU WISH TO TRAIN, YOU MUST HAVE A GOAL.
TELL ME, MUSASHI, WHAT IS *YOURS?*
TO BEAT INSHUN.
AND YOU'RE ASKING *ME*, INSHUN'S MASTER, TO TRAIN YOU?
HRMPH
YOU'RE AN ODD FELLOW.
HMPH!


MUSASHI, IN ORDER TO DEFEAT INSHUN...
...YOU MUST DO SOMETHING WITH WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE...
FSSS
DO SOMETHING WITH WHAT I ALREADY HAVE...?
SSH
!!
AND YOU NEVER WILL... NOT UNTIL YOU'RE WILLING TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOU LOST.
HRMPH!
YOU DON'T HAVE A CLUE.


HOW I LOST...?


I DIDN'T LOSE!!
I'M STILL ALIVE!!
IT WAS A STRATEGIC RETREAT.
IT'S NOT OVER YET.


HRMPH!
WELL, AT LEAST YOU'VE RECOVERED ENOUGH TO *ACT* STRONG.
FSH

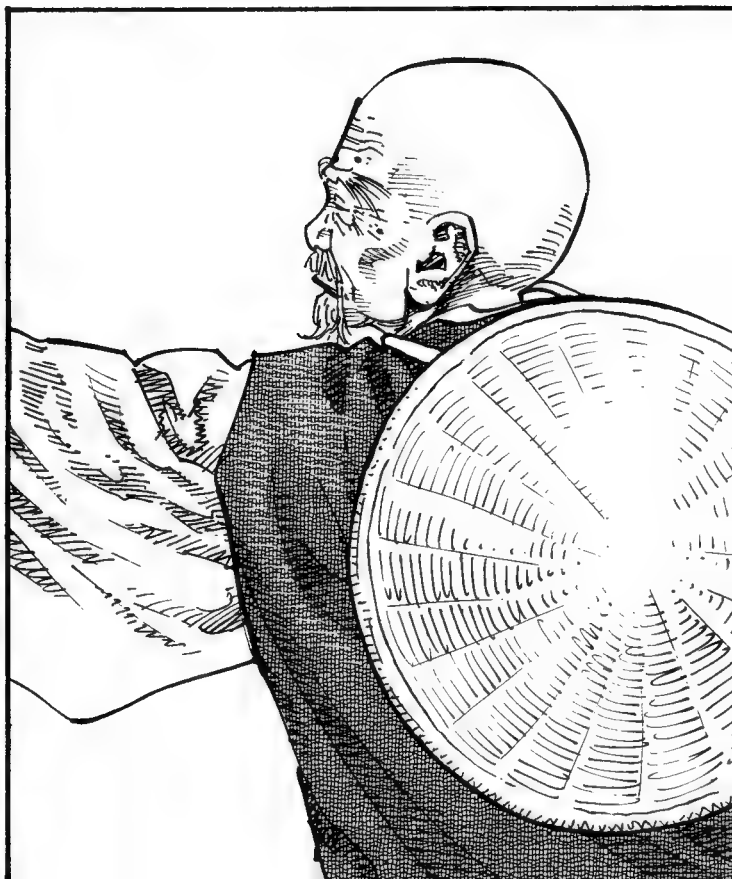

WHAT WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU DEFEAT INSHUN?
Flp

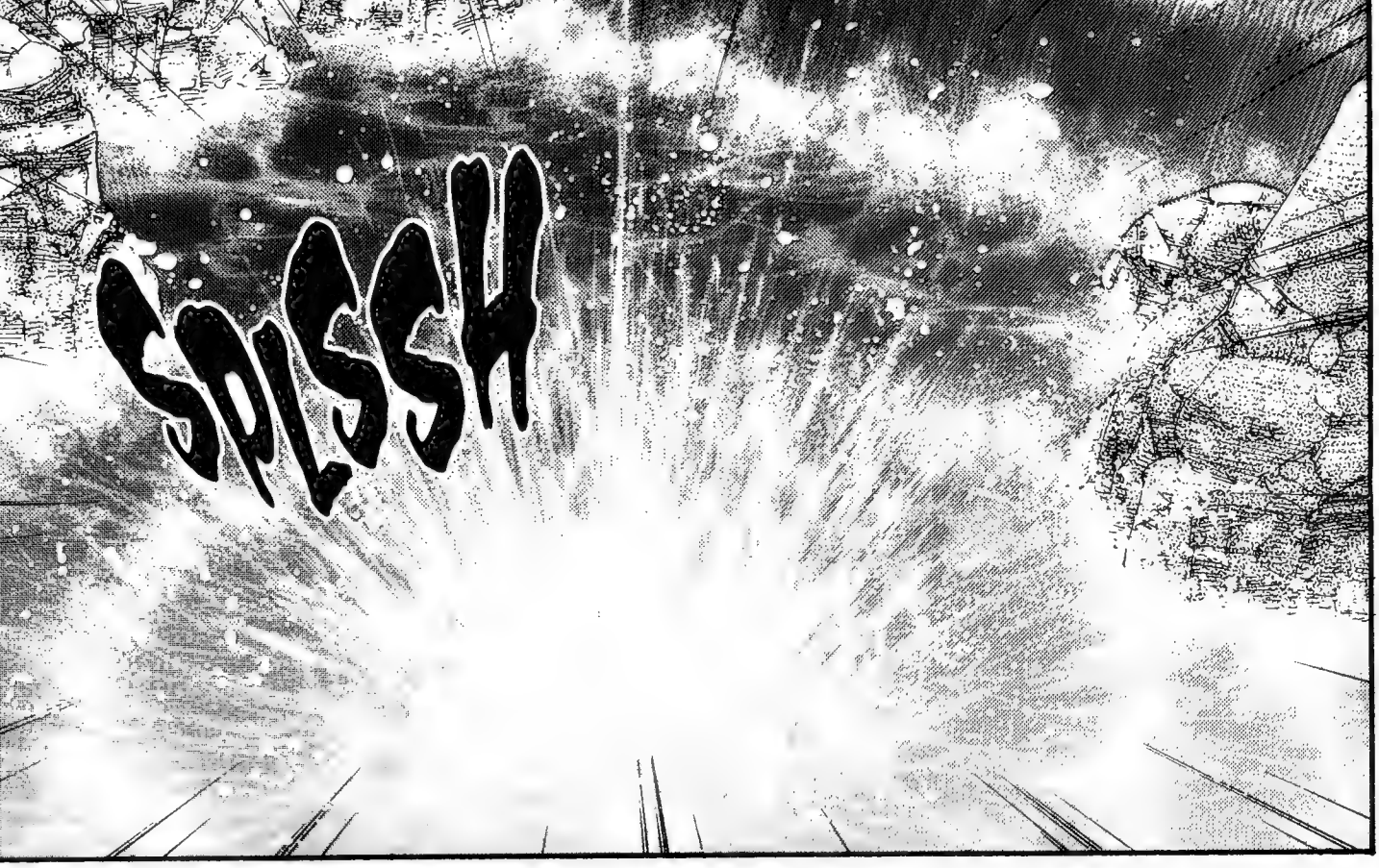

INSHUN...!
!!
FWOOSH


YAH!!
NNGH!
FWOOSH
HRMPH ...
FWOOSH
YAH!!
NNGH!
OLD MAN!!
ARGH!


THOK
YAH!
!!



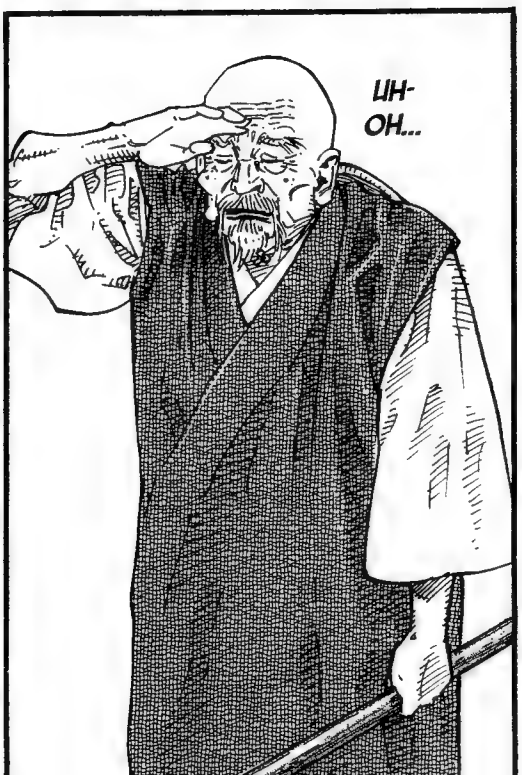



SPLSSH


FSSSSH

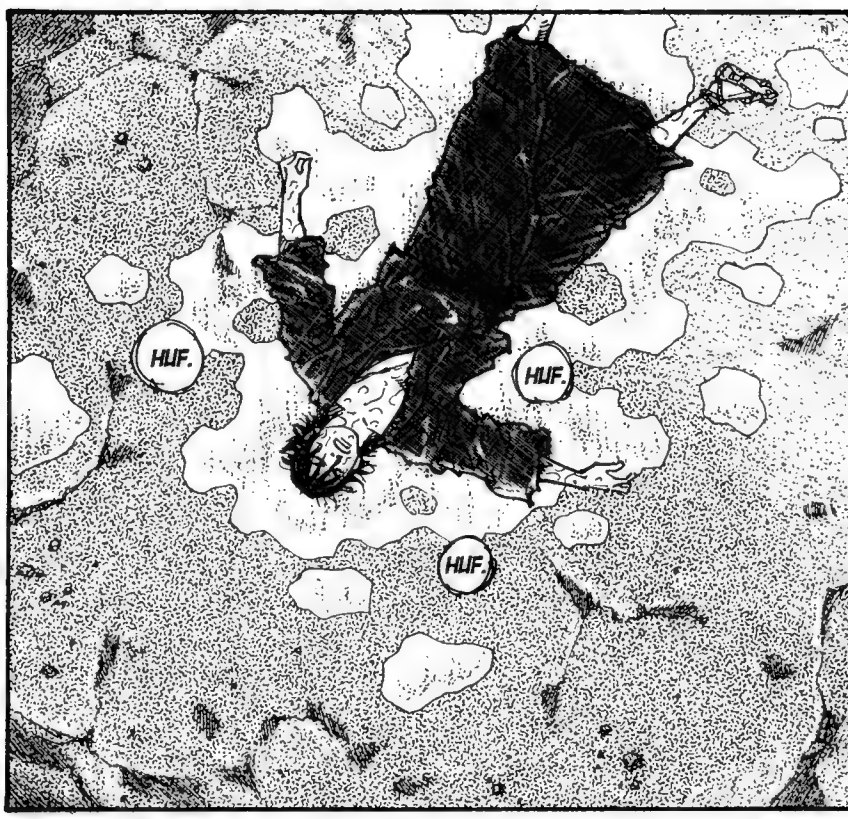

...
HSSSSH


...!!
FSSSSSH


UH-
OH...




YOU ALMOST DIED.
HRMPH!
...
HMPH!


HUF.
HUF.
HUF.




HOW DID I BECOME SUCH A COWARD?







DAMN!

DAMN!

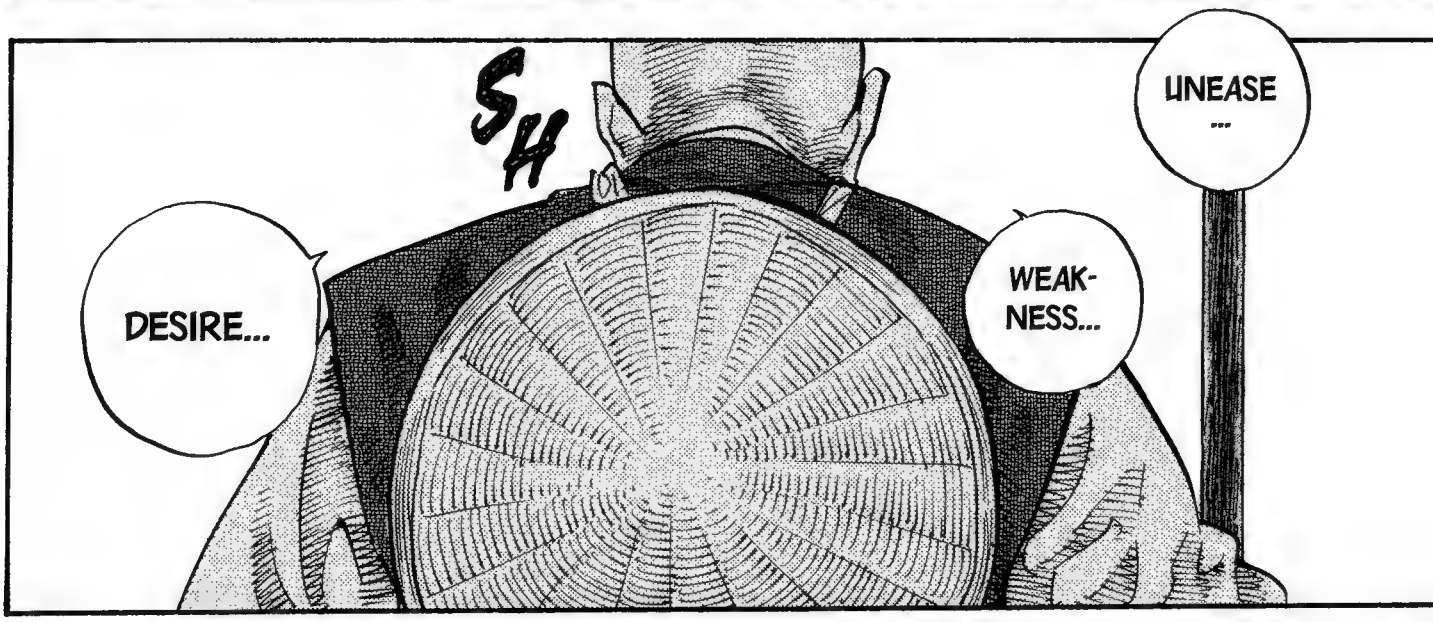
DAMN IT!!

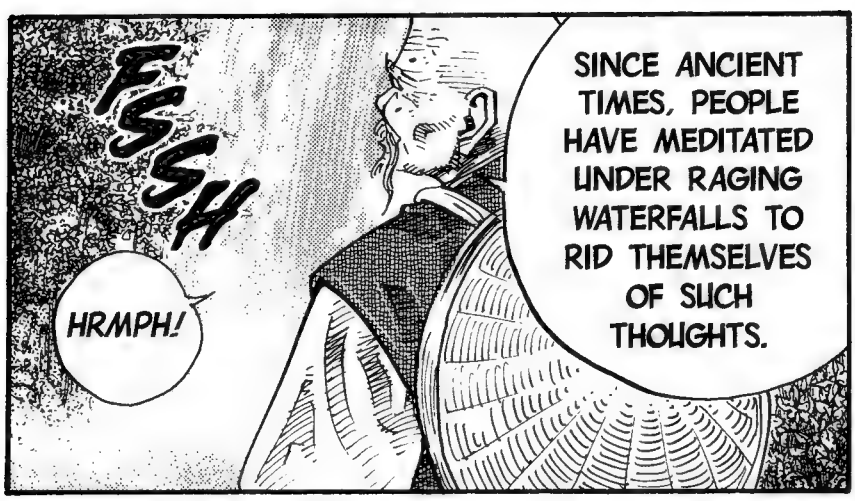
I'M SCARED.

I'M SCARED OF INSHUN.

HOW CAN I BEAT HIM!?


FSSS


SH
UNEASE...
WEAK-NESS...
DESIRE...


FSSH
HRMPH!
SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, PEOPLE HAVE MEDITATED UNDER RAGING WATERFALLS TO RID THEMSELVES OF SUCH THOUGHTS.


FEAR...


...!!

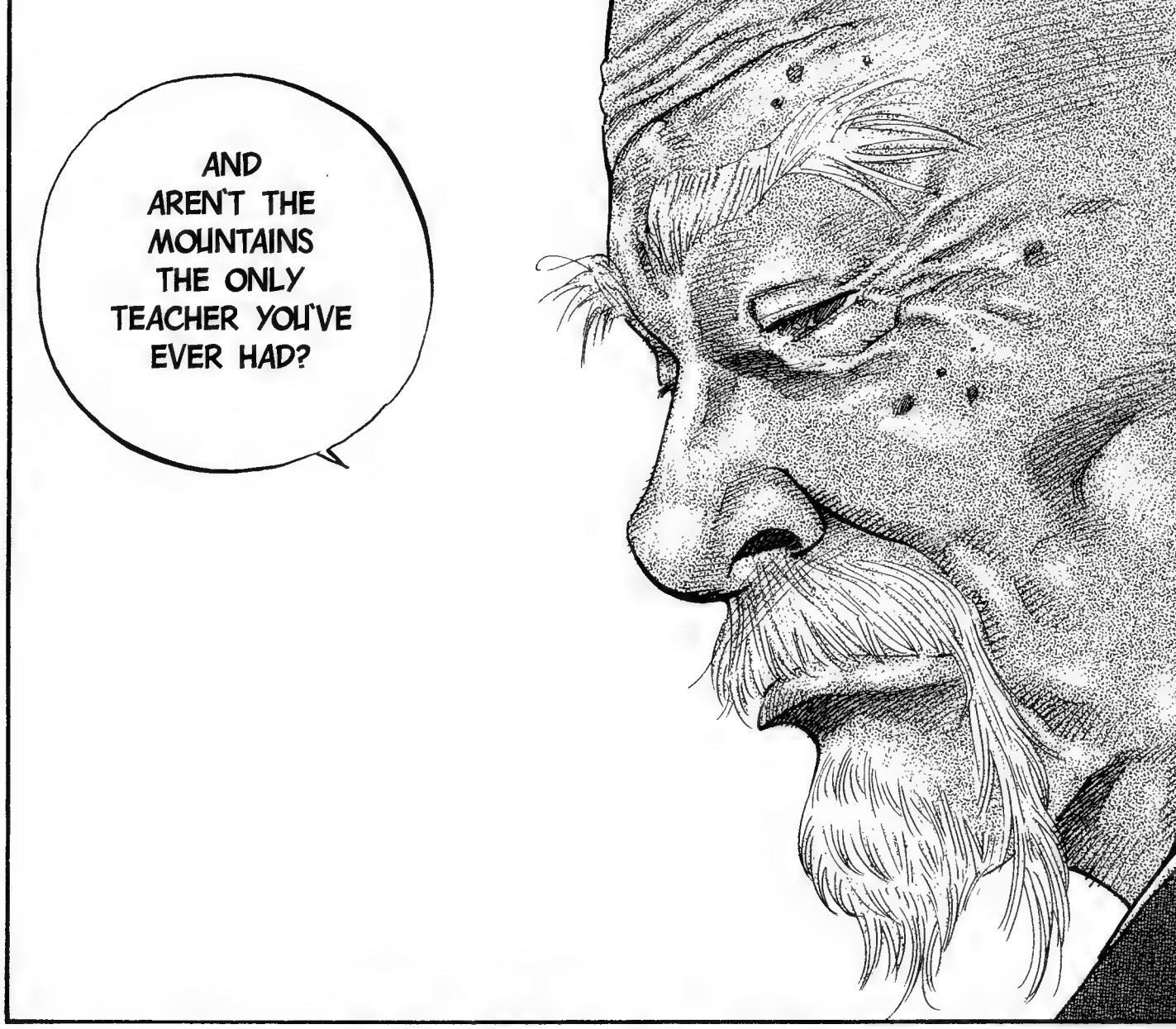

FSSSSSHH


BY THE TIME YOU RISE UP OUT OF THE FALLS...
FSSHH
...YOU SHALL BECOME TRULY AWARE.


...
...


...THAT IT'S NOT GOING TO DO ANY GOOD.
THUD
!!
YOU ALMOST DIED.
...
WEEZ
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
FSSSSHHH
...
...

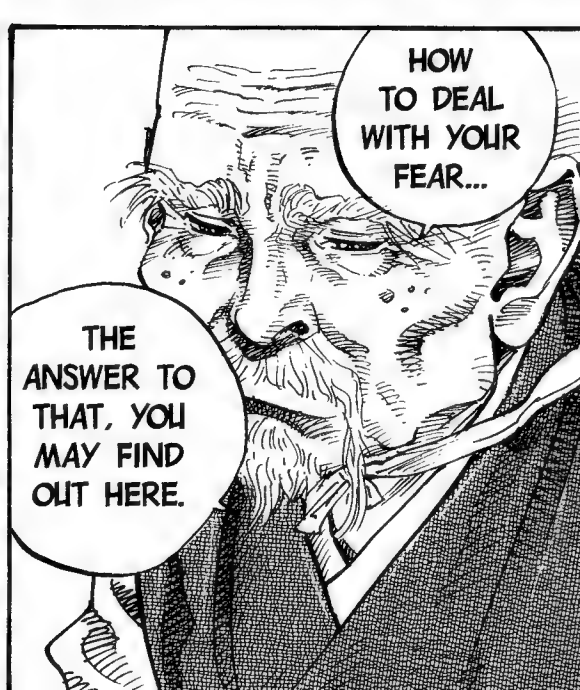

WHY DID WE COME OUT HERE, ANYWAY!?
HM? YOU'RE NOT COMING BACK WITH ME.
HEY!!
FWIP
HRMPH, TIME TO GO HOME, BEFORE THE SUN SETS.
YOU ARE STAYING HERE.
IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, THERE'S PLENTY OF FISH AND BIRDS OUT HERE...
...NOT TO MENTION BEASTS.
THE MOUNTAINS... THAT'S WHERE YOU CAME FROM...
...!!


AND AREN'T THE MOUNTAINS THE ONLY TEACHER YOU'VE EVER HAD?




!!

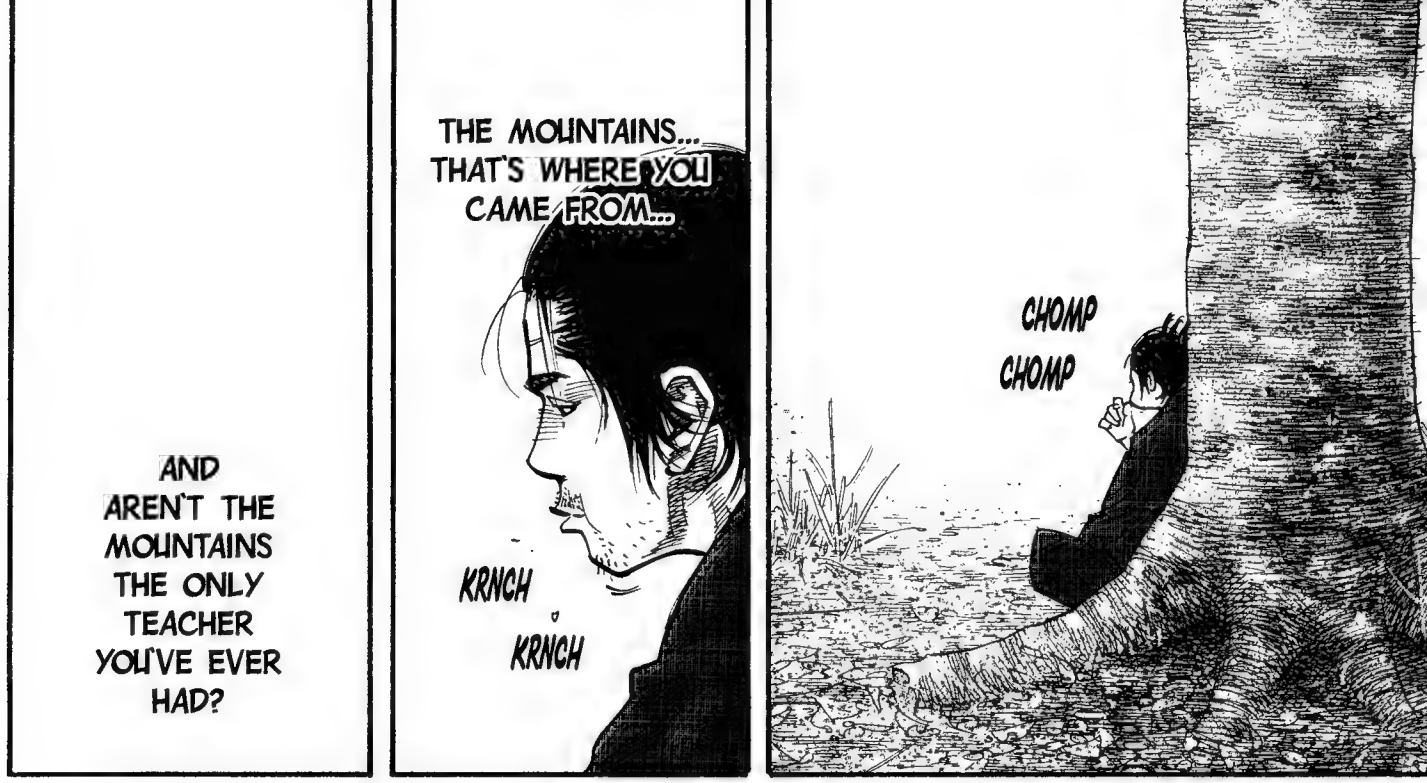

HRMPH ...

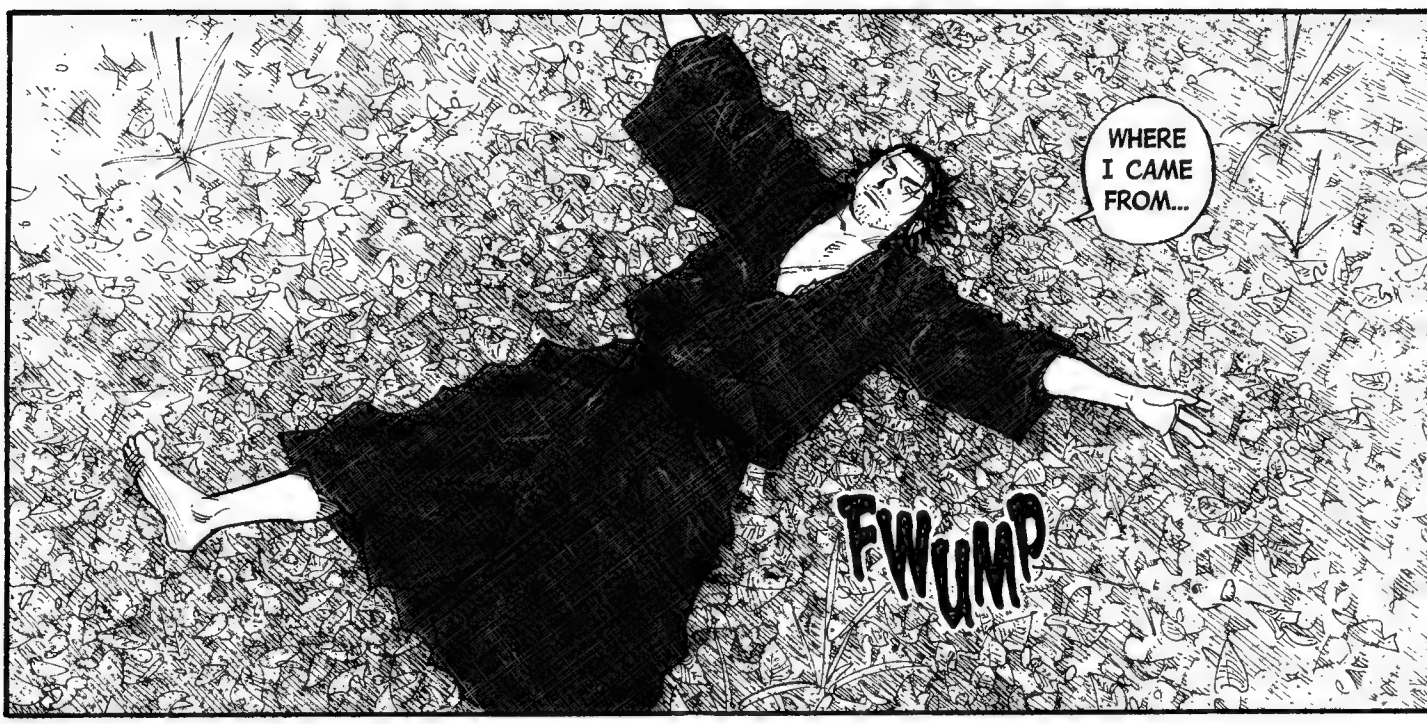

HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR FEAR...
THE ANSWER TO THAT, YOU MAY FIND OUT HERE.


INSHUN OF HŌZŌIN...
TUGG
I WILL DEFEAT YOU...
FICH
FICH
FICH
IT'S NOT OVER YET.
I WILL!!
EEP
EEP
EEP
EEP
EEP
EEP



#53 | Journey


AND AREN'T THE MOUNTAINS THE ONLY TEACHER YOU'VE EVER HAD?
THE MOUNTAINS... THAT'S WHERE YOU CAME FROM...
KRNCH
KRNCH
CHOMP
CHOMP


WHERE I CAME FROM...
FWUMP


HOME...




!!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?
I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU.
AH!
THUP
FWIP


YOU'LL NEVER BEAT ME.
I'VE NEVER KNOWN MUCH...
...ABOUT THE MAN I CALL MY FATHER...
...
NOTHING AT ALL...
I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HIM.

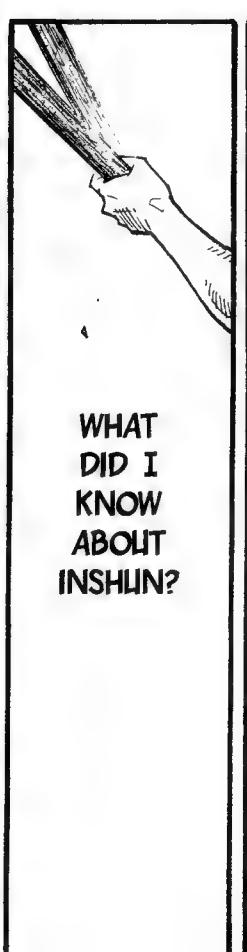



PHEW.



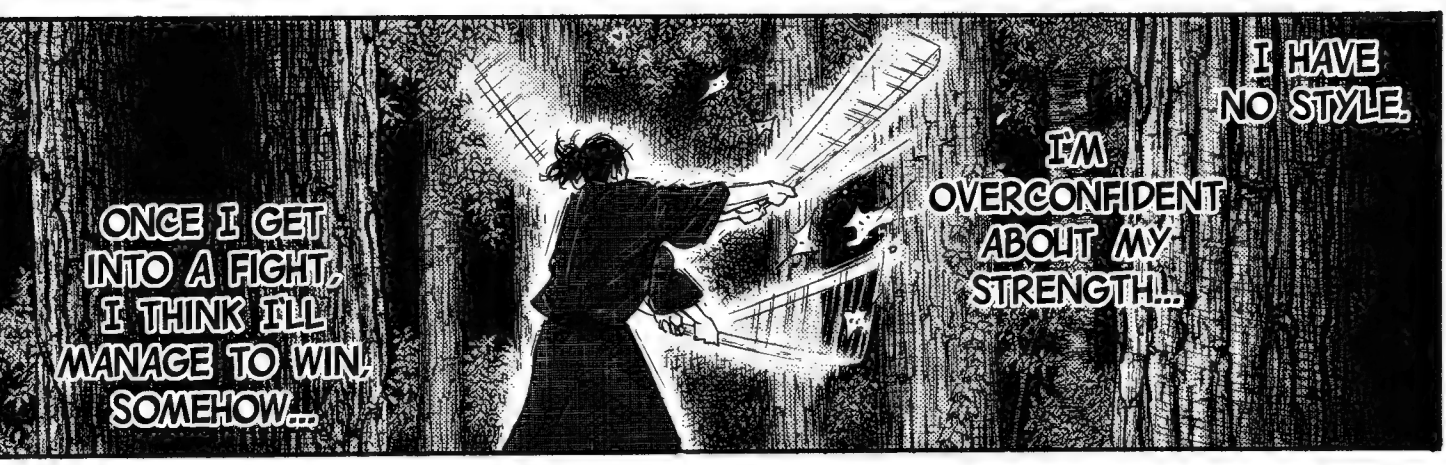

SLISH
SLISH
SLISH


NOTHING...
I'D NEVER EVEN SEEN HIM BEFORE.


WHAT DID I KNOW ABOUT INSHUN?

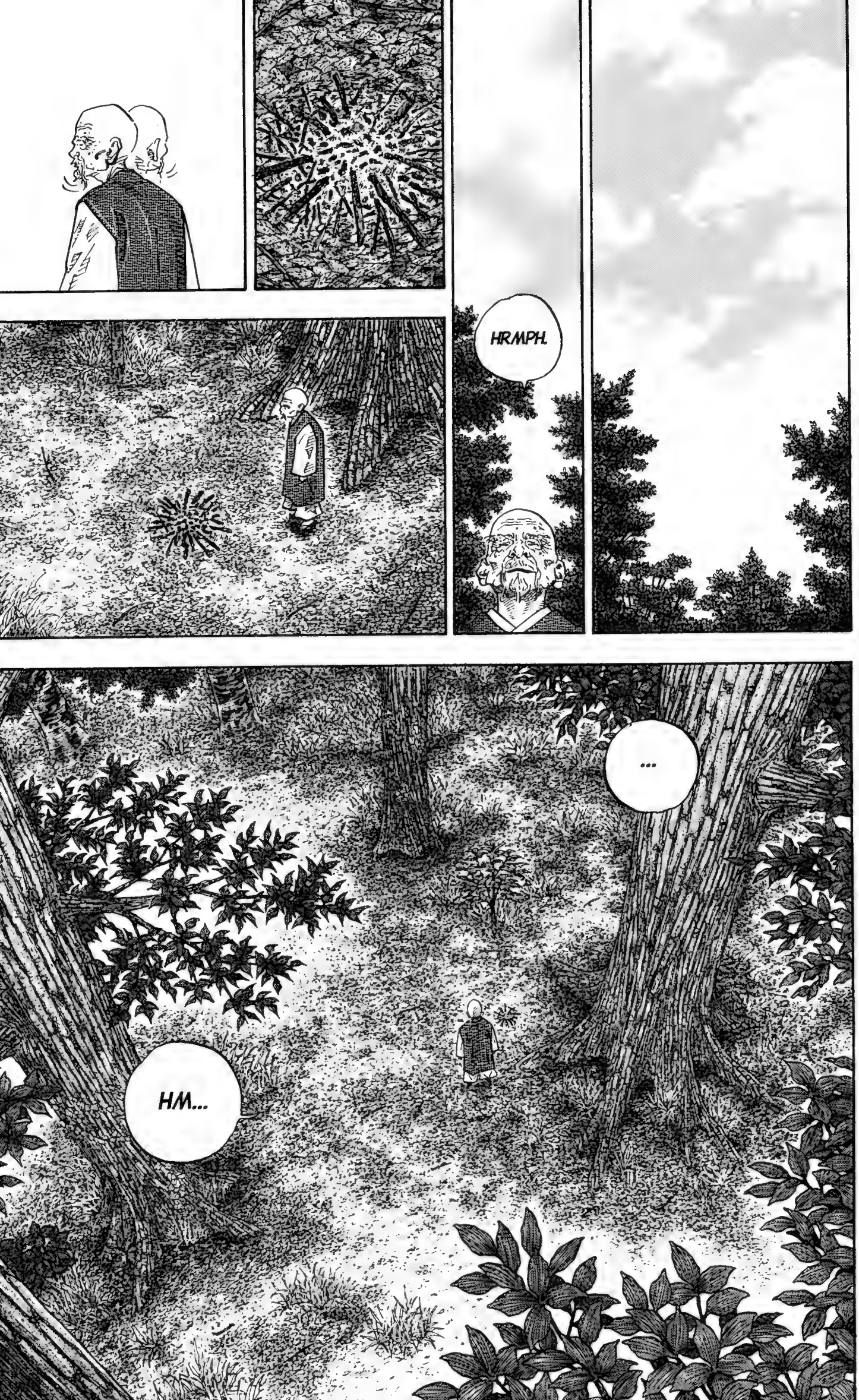



I JUST CHARGED IN BLINDLY...
...FOR AMBITION'S SAKE.


I HAVE NO STYLE.
I'M OVERCONFIDENT ABOUT MY STRENGTH...
ONCE I GET INTO A FIGHT, I THINK I'LL MANAGE TO WIN, SOMEHOW...


IMMATURE...


UGLY ARROGANCE.
HUF
HUF
INEXCUSABLE.
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...!!
HUF
HUF
HUF
YOU HAVE NO EXCUSE!!
HUF
HUF


HRMPH.
...
HM...


YOU WERE SO OVERCONFIDENT AND RECKLESS.
YOUR FIRST DEFEAT MUST HAVE BEEN ALL THE MORE SHOCKING TO YOU.
I DON'T BLAME YOU.
I DON'T BLAME YOU AT ALL...
YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN.
I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR RUNNING AWAY FROM YOUR DEFEAT AND YOUR LONELINESS...
HRMPH.




I'M GOING TO KILL INSHUN!!
FSSSSSSHHH
BRR BRR...


WATERFALL'S NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL, OLD MAN.
FSSSHH
WASHES AWAY ALL YOUR DISTRACTIONS.
SO IT *DID* HELP YOU FIND SOME ANSWERS...
TELL ME... HOW DO YOU PLAN ON MASTERING YOUR FEAR?
SMIRK


I DIDN'T LOSE.
IT WAS JUST A STEP TOWARDS VICTORY!
...
SO YOU'RE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOU LOST.
I NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT INSHUN.


FSSHH
TRAIN ME, OLD MAN!!


FWISH
FP
ONCE YOU KNOW INSHUN...
FP
...WILL YOU STILL BE ABLE TO FACE HIM?
!!
THP
...
...


I CAN'T MOVE FORWARD...
KRICH
...UNLESS I BEAT HIM.


FSSSHH


WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING HERE...?
AM I MAKING ANY PROGRESS AT ALL?
OR AM I JUST FALLING APART?
TELL ME IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY...


Vagabond

(ZZZ... THAT'S NOT RIGHT...)



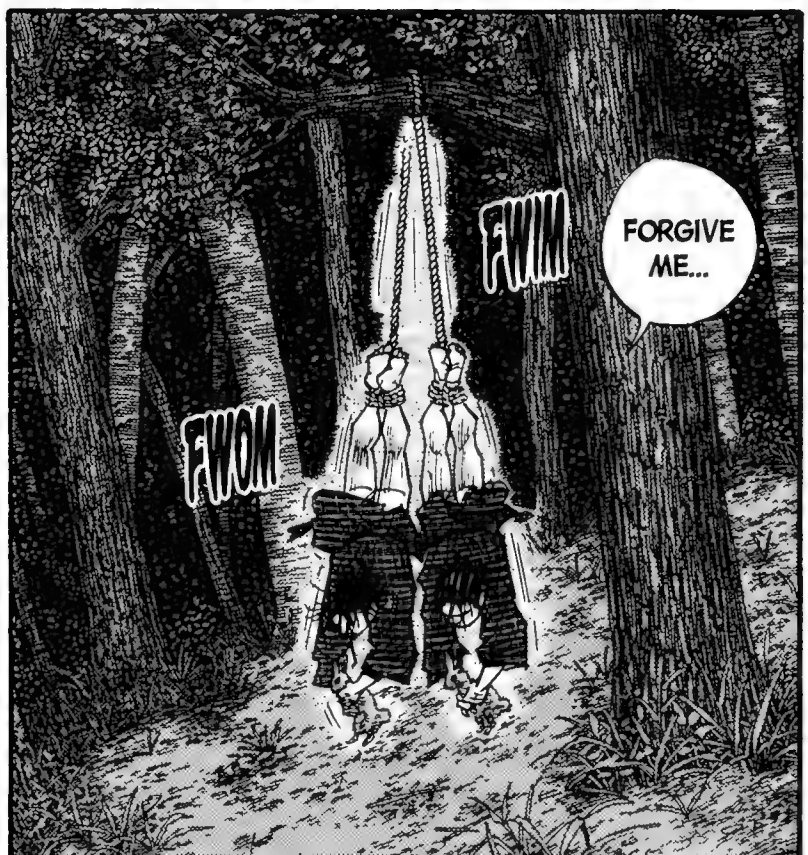
YOU'RE HERE.
HRMPH.


HRMPH.
I'M GOING TO SEE THROUGH THAT SPEAR OF YOURS, OLD MAN.
TODAY'S THE DAY...
#54 Vision


GLUG
GLUG
GLUG


URGH...
HA HA HA
NOT GOOD ENOUGH.
AND I'M JUST AN OLD MAN WHO RETIRED A LONG TIME AGO.
FWIP
FICH
FICH


FWOOSH


FWOM
FWIM
FORGIVE ME...



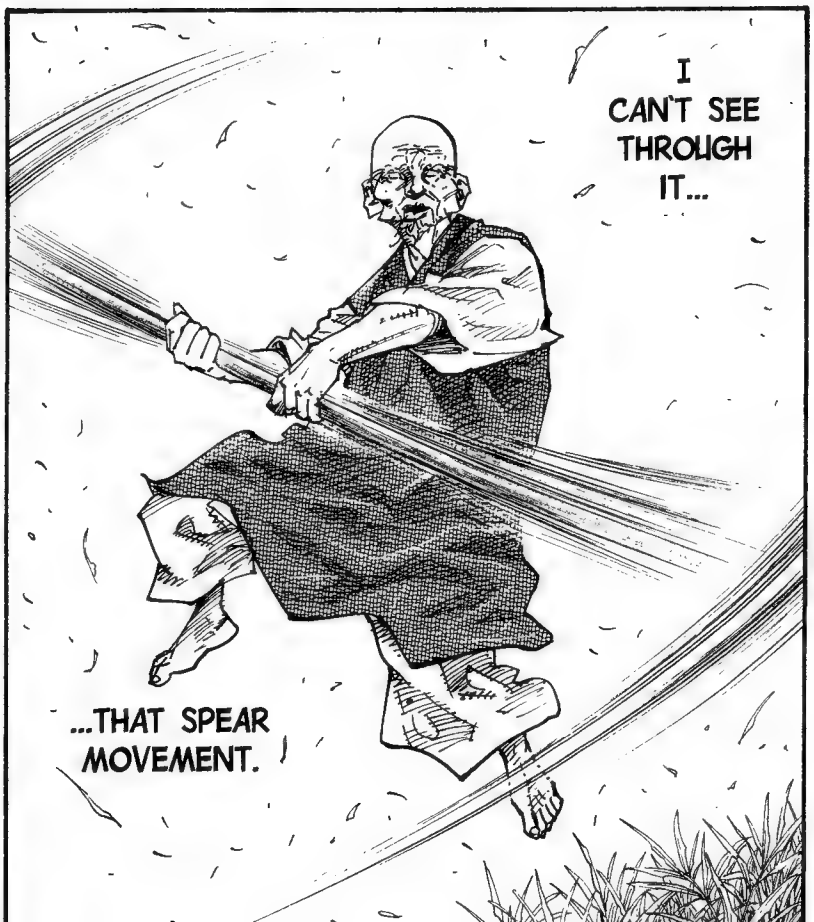

KRAKKL
KRAKKL


HRMPH
THE GREAT IN'EI...


HMPH.
DAMN THAT OLD MAN.


CHOMP


I DON'T HAVE THE VISION.


I CAN'T SEE THROUGH IT...
...THAT SPEAR MOVEMENT.


SHIK
SHIK
ONCE YOUR HEART IS PREOCCUPIED...
...YOUR SWORD WILL NOT BE TRUE.


TAKUAN...
THEN YOU WILL DIE.


WHAT WENT WRONG...?
WHAT COULD HAVE DISTRACTED ME...?


...

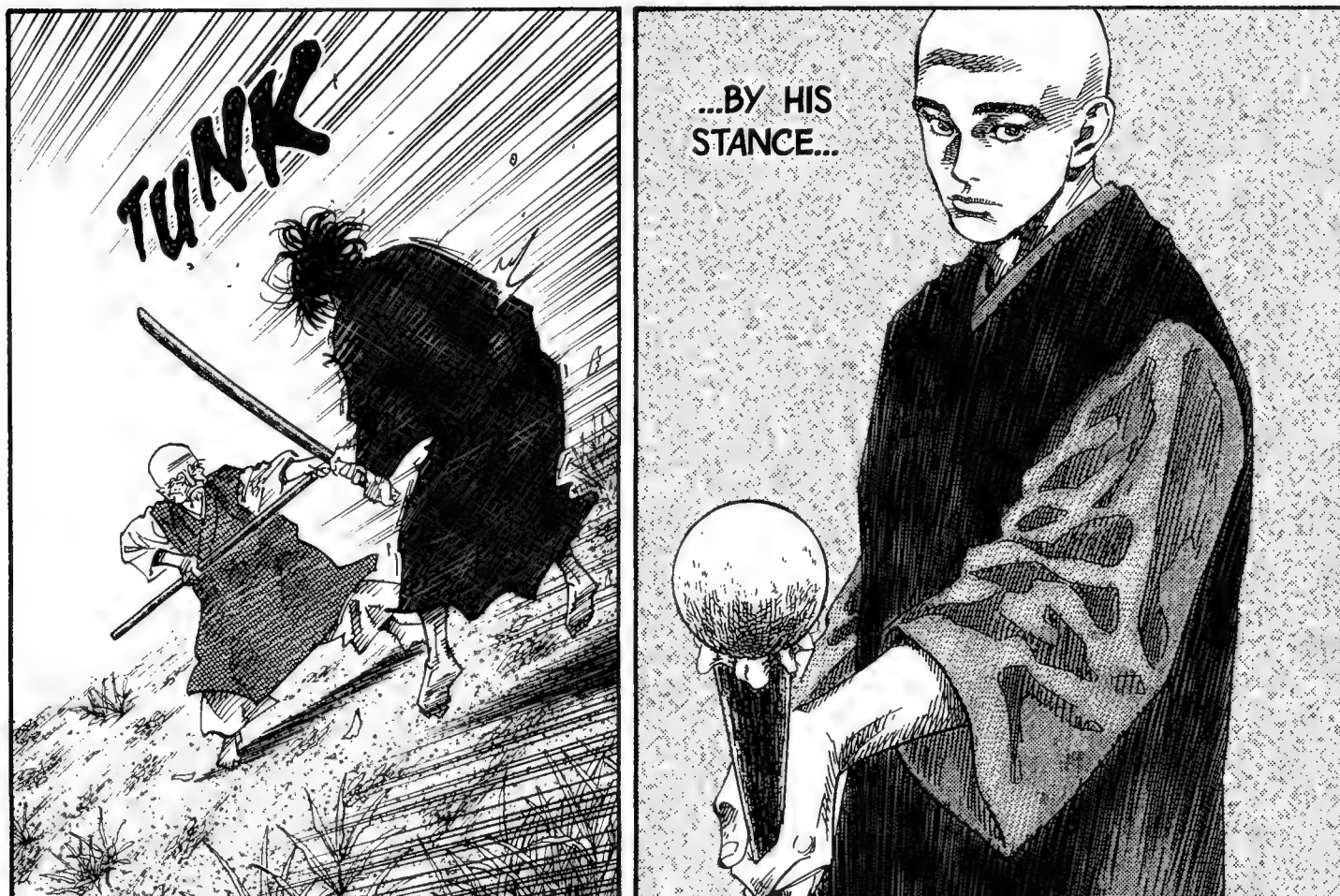



PRE-
OCCUPIED
WITH A
SINGLE TREE,
YOU'LL MISS
THE ENTIRE
FOREST.
PREOCCUPIED
WITH A
SINGLE LEAF...
...YOU
WON'T
SEE THE
TREE.

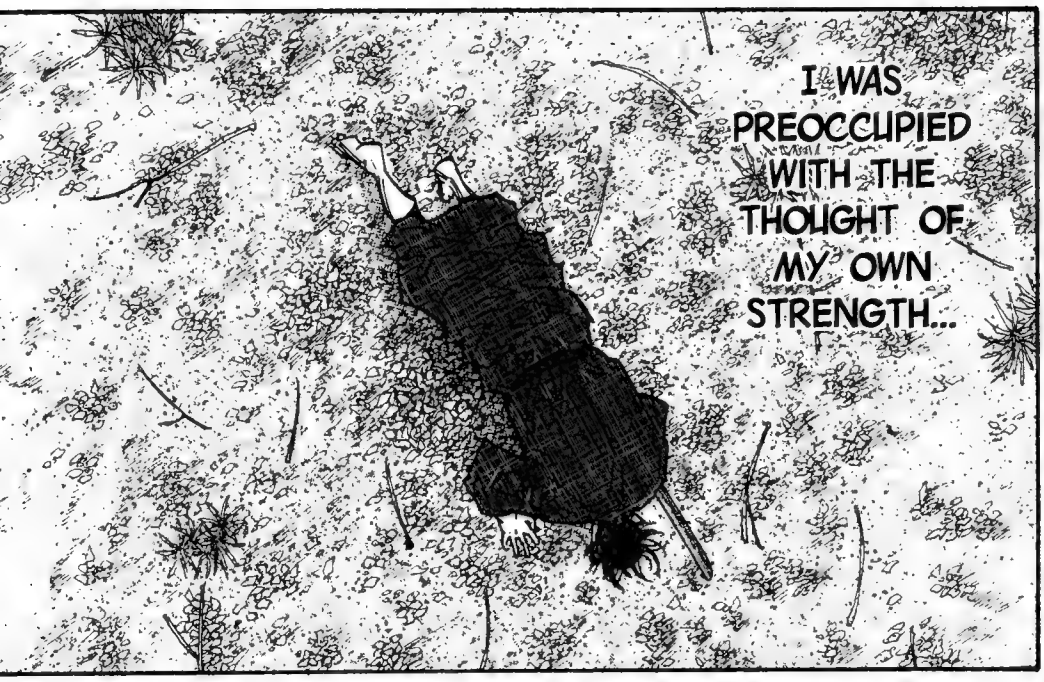

...TO
REALLY
SEE INSHUN
IN THAT
FIGHT?
DID I
HAVE
THE
VISION...

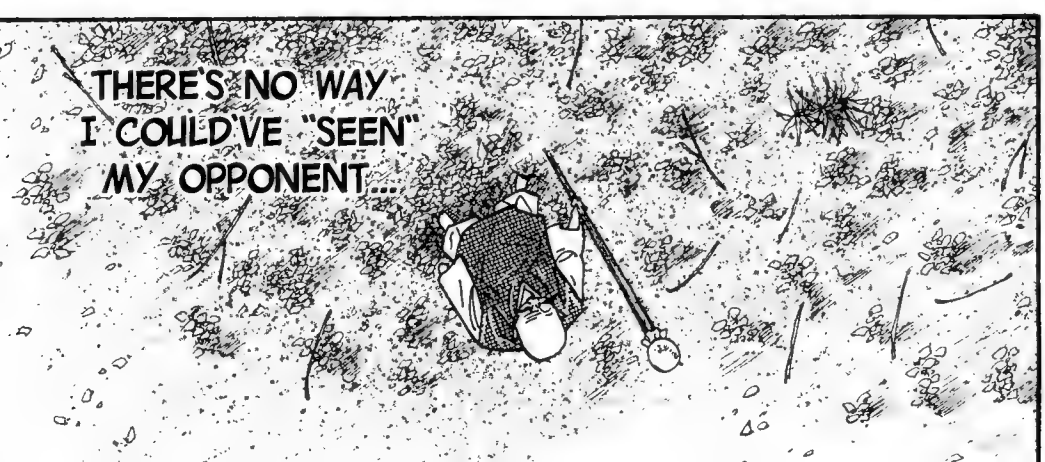



FOOL!
COWARD!
I WAS DISTRACTED FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
I WAS DISTRACTED...
...BY HIS STARE.


TUNK
...BY HIS STANCE...




I WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE THOUGHT OF MY OWN STRENGTH...


THERE'S NO WAY I COULD'VE "SEEN" MY OPPONENT...


AND I WAS DISTRACTED BY ONE MORE THING...


KRICH
KRICH
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
OLD MAN...
HMM...
NEXT TIME YOU COME, BRING ME SOME SALT...

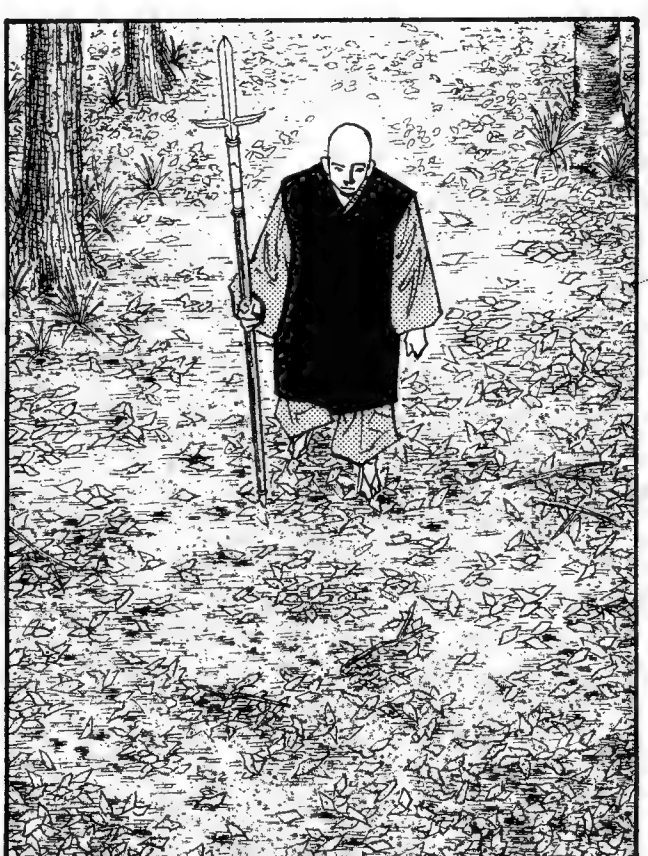





MAYBE I'LL WAIT UNTIL IT'S HATCHED.
NO...IT MIGHT NOT BE THERE TOMORROW.


AN EGG...


!!






KRICH

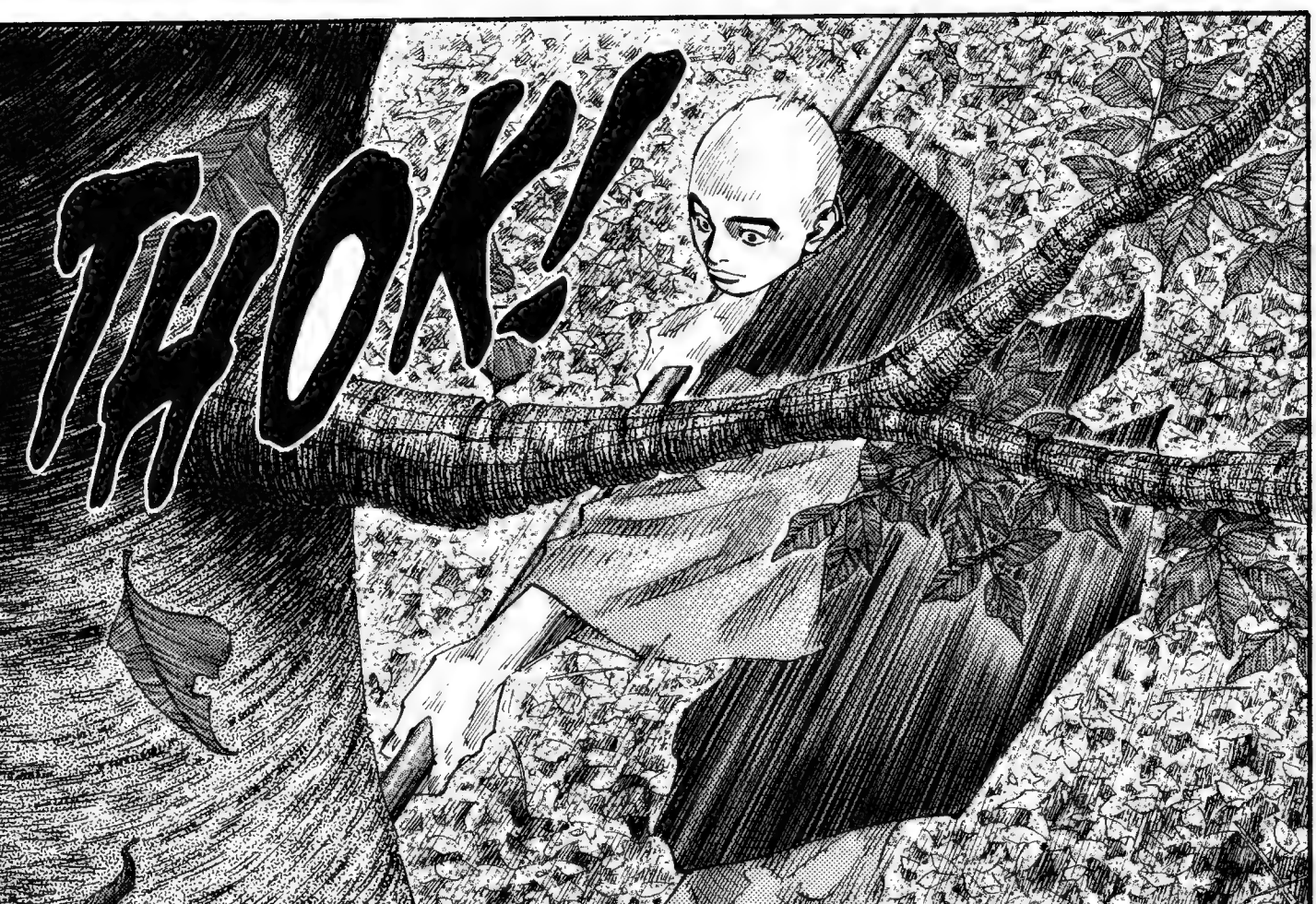

INSHUN!?


THMP
THMP
IS HE LOOKING FOR ME?
THMP
THMP
...
THMP
THMP

ドカ


THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS TO TRULY "SEE."
SEE EVERYTHING IN ITS ENTIRETY...
...EFFORTLESSLY...

THIS TIME, REALLY LOOK AT HIM.
LOOK AT HIM...

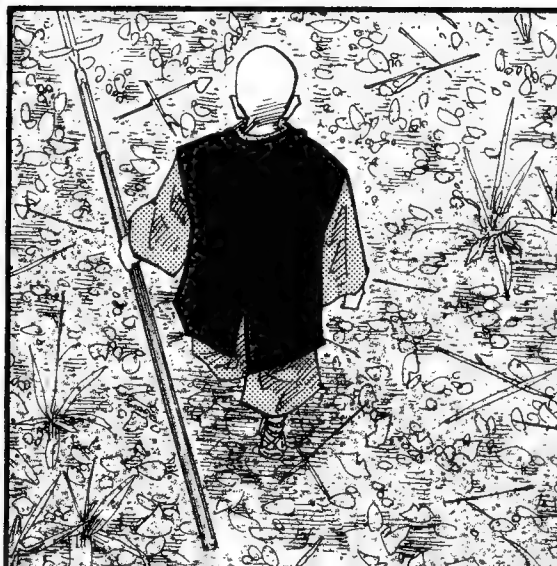

TSUKU!


...


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

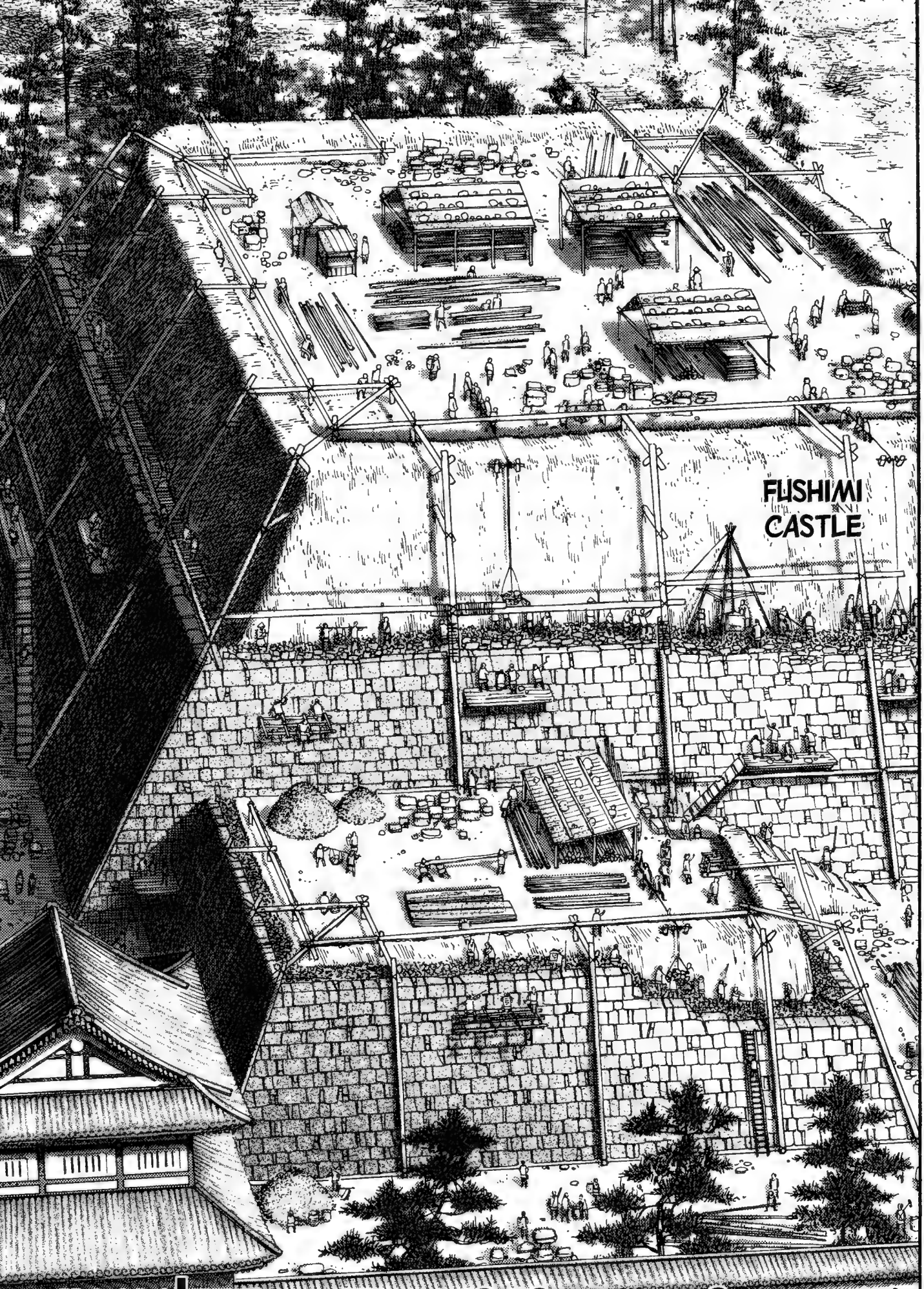



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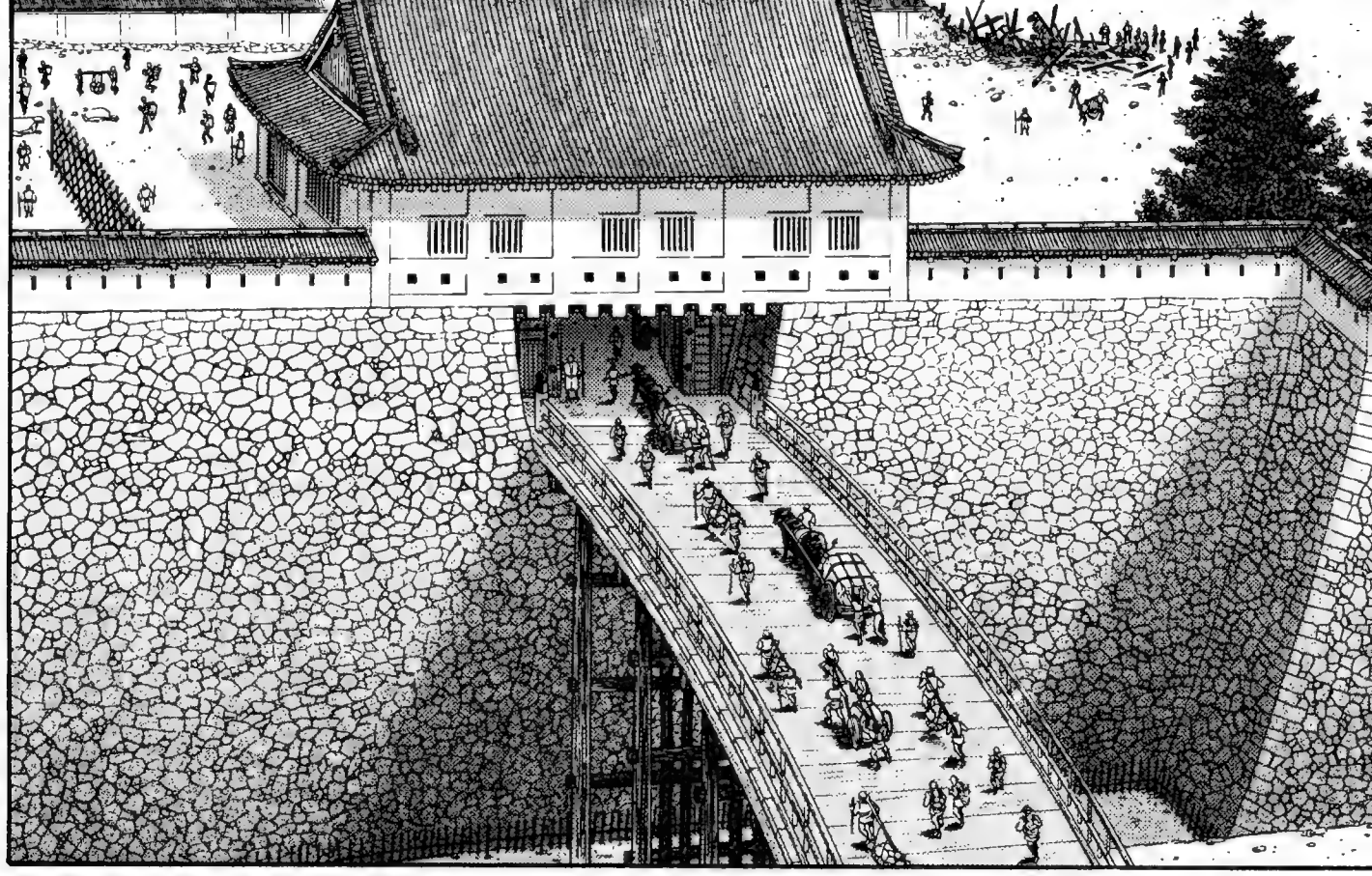


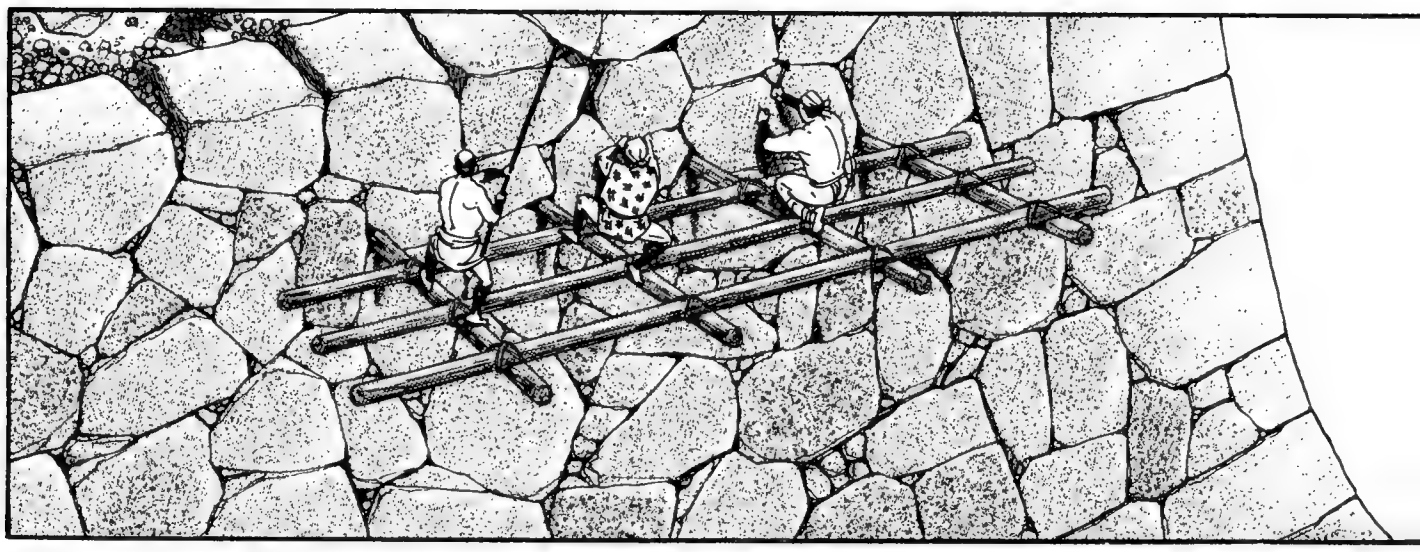

Vagabond

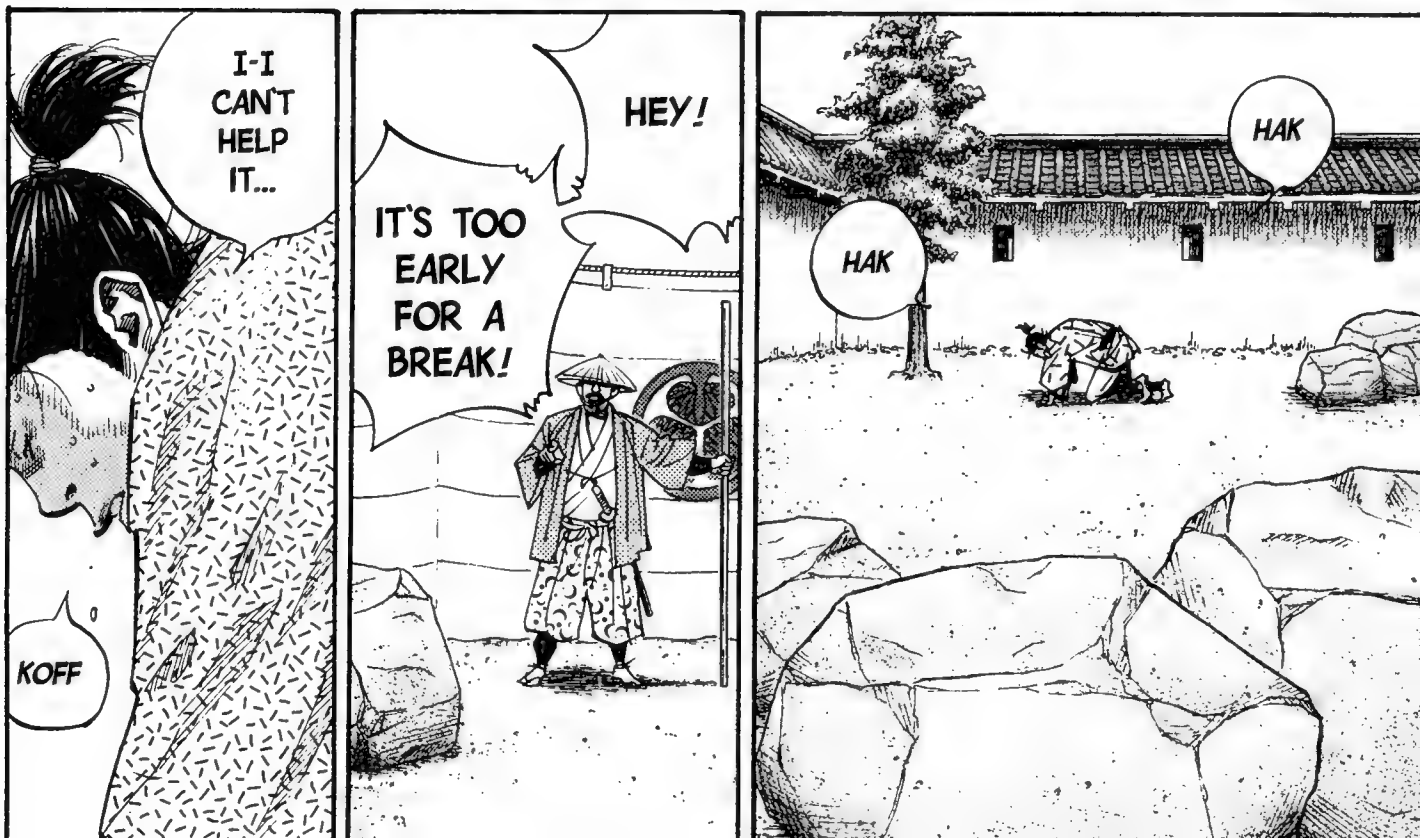

(WHAT'S THAT DARN GUY
DOING HERE?)



#55 The Decision of a Formerly Kept Man






I-I CAN'T HELP IT...
KOFF
HEY!
IT'S TOO EARLY FOR A BREAK!
HAK
HAK


I'M NOT WELL...
HMM...
YOU ARE LOOKING KIND OF PALE!
HEY, MATAHACHI!
QUIT SLACKING OFF!
WATER-MELONS!
WATER-MELONS!
I JUST CAN'T TAKE THIS HEAT.
I'LL...
I'LL BE OKAY...
COULD I TAKE A SHORT BREAK THIS AFTERNOON?
I'LL TAKE ONE...
WATER-MELONS HERE!

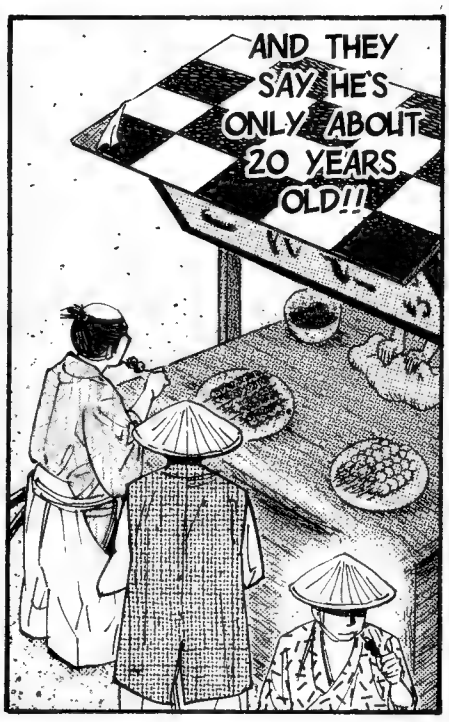

I FEEL BAD FOR EVERYONE...
Y-YOU GUYS SHARE THIS...
HM... A TACTFUL BRIBE, EH? HEH HEH...
YOU'RE SPINELESS AND WEAK.
...
THRAK


MY LIFE WOULD BE THE ENVY OF EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE.
RIGHT NOW, I SHOULD BE THE HEAD OF THE HONIDEN FAMILY, MARRIED TO THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE VILLAGE.
DAMN...!!
IF ONLY I HADN'T MET *HER*.
I'M ONLY 22! IT'S NOT TOO LATE!!
I'M GOING TO START ALL OVER AGAIN!!
I LEFT OKŌ AND I QUIT DRINKING.
BUT THAT'S ALL IN THE PAST...


I HEARD HE WAS AN EQUAL MATCH TO DENSHICHIRŌ YOSHIOKA...!!!
IS THAT RIGHT!?




WHAT AN AMAZING FIGHTER.
BUT WHO IS HE?


AND THEY SAY HE'S ONLY ABOUT 20 YEARS OLD!!


FIVE YEARS...
...TAKEZŌ.


MIYAMOTO ...
...MUSASHI.

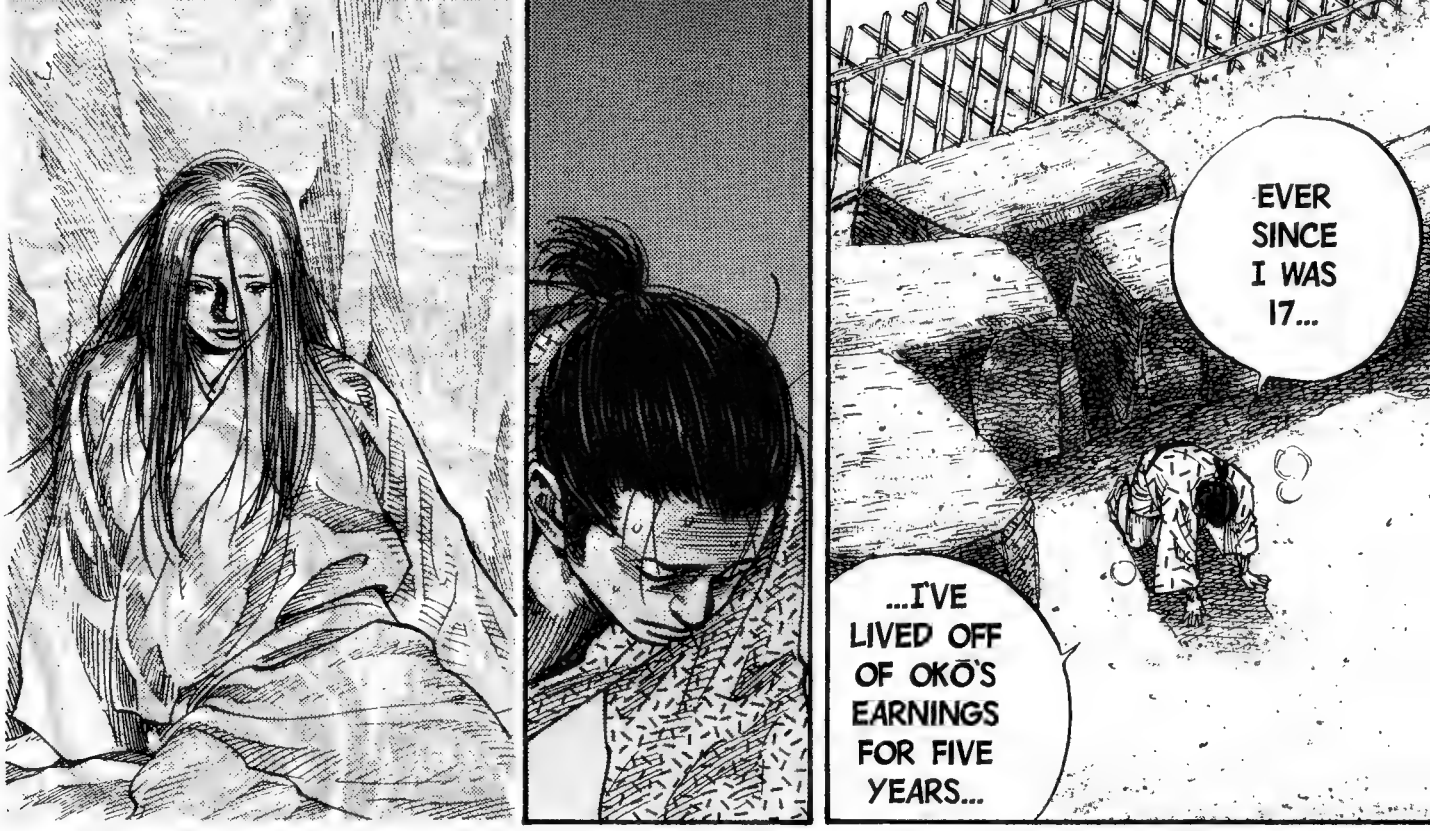

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!


YOU JUST WAIT AND SEE!!
IN FIVE YEARS, I'LL SURPASS YOU!!


I'M SO PATHETIC...
HAK
I FINALLY FIND A JOB, BUT I CAN'T KEEP UP...


ALL RIGHT.
COME ON.
SORRY, EVERY-ONE.


BREAK TIME'S OVER!!
BACK TO WORK!!


EVER SINCE I WAS 17...
...I'VE LIVED OFF OF OKŌ'S EARNINGS FOR FIVE YEARS...



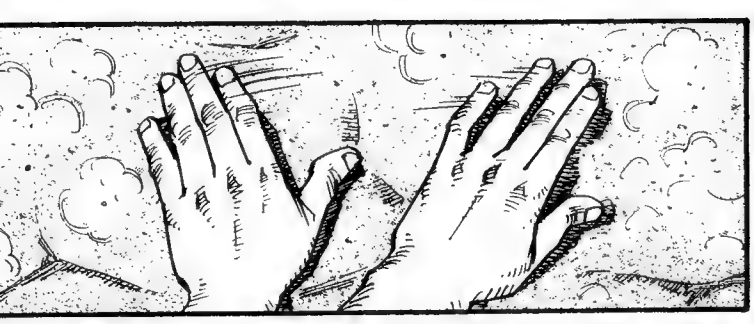

WHAT AM I --!?
NO! I DON'T MISS *HER!*



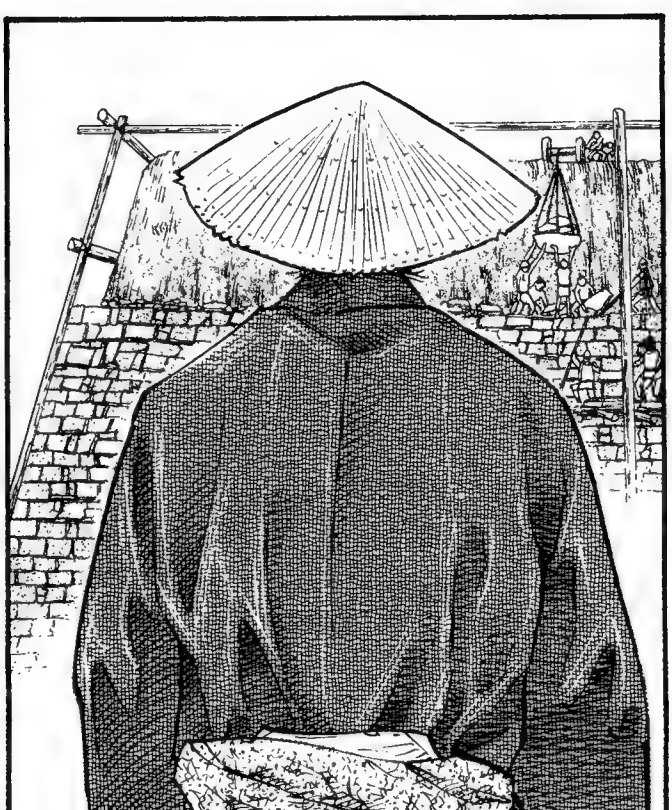


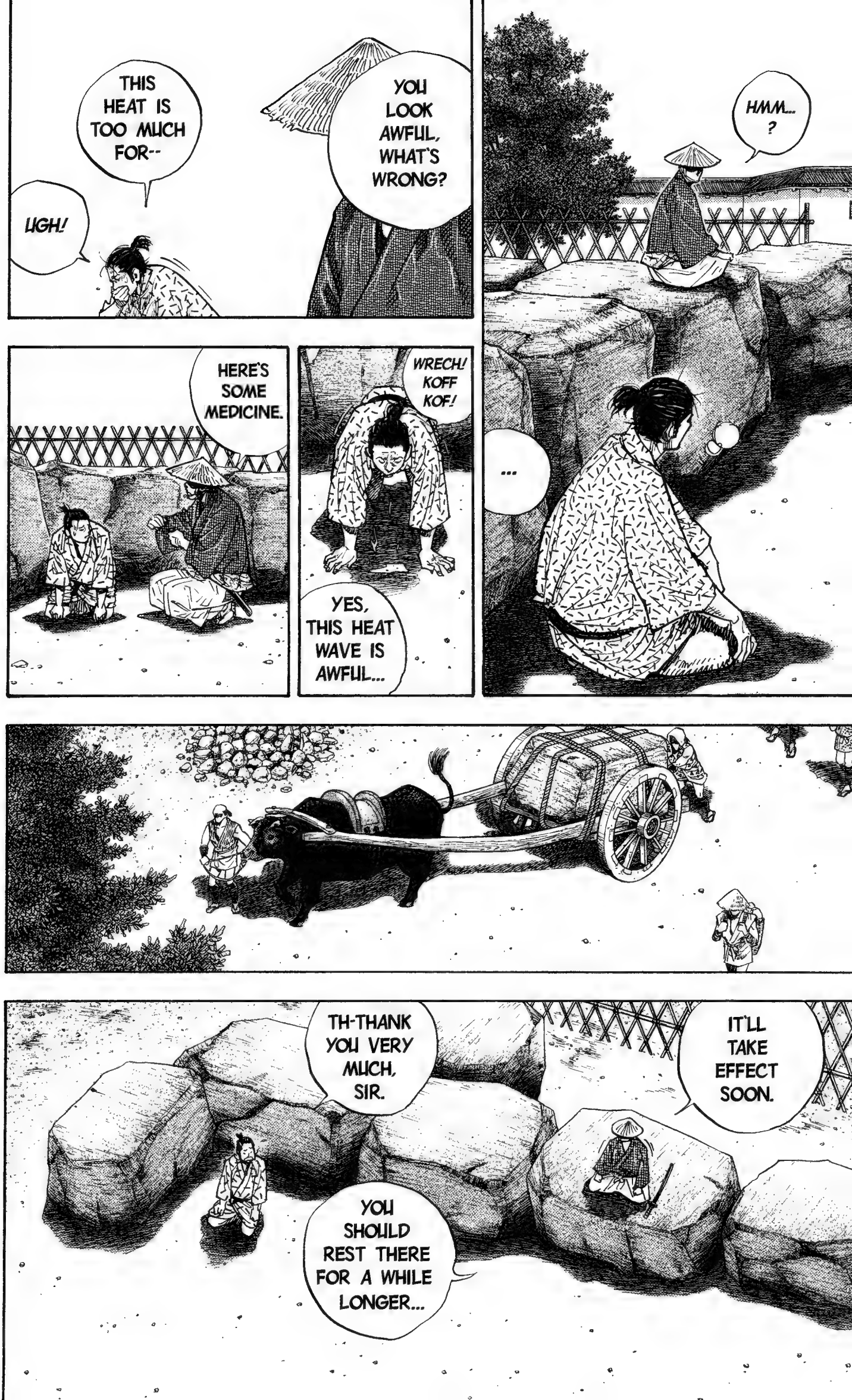






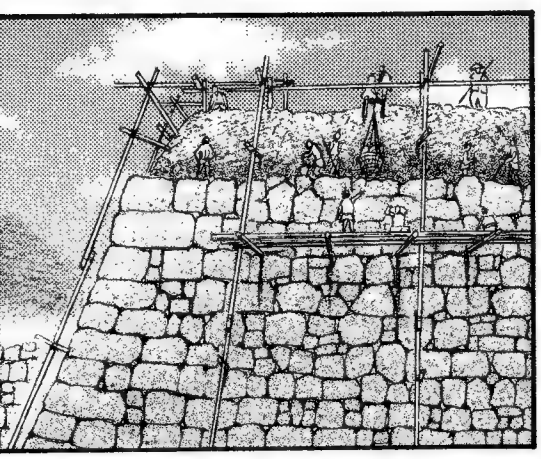


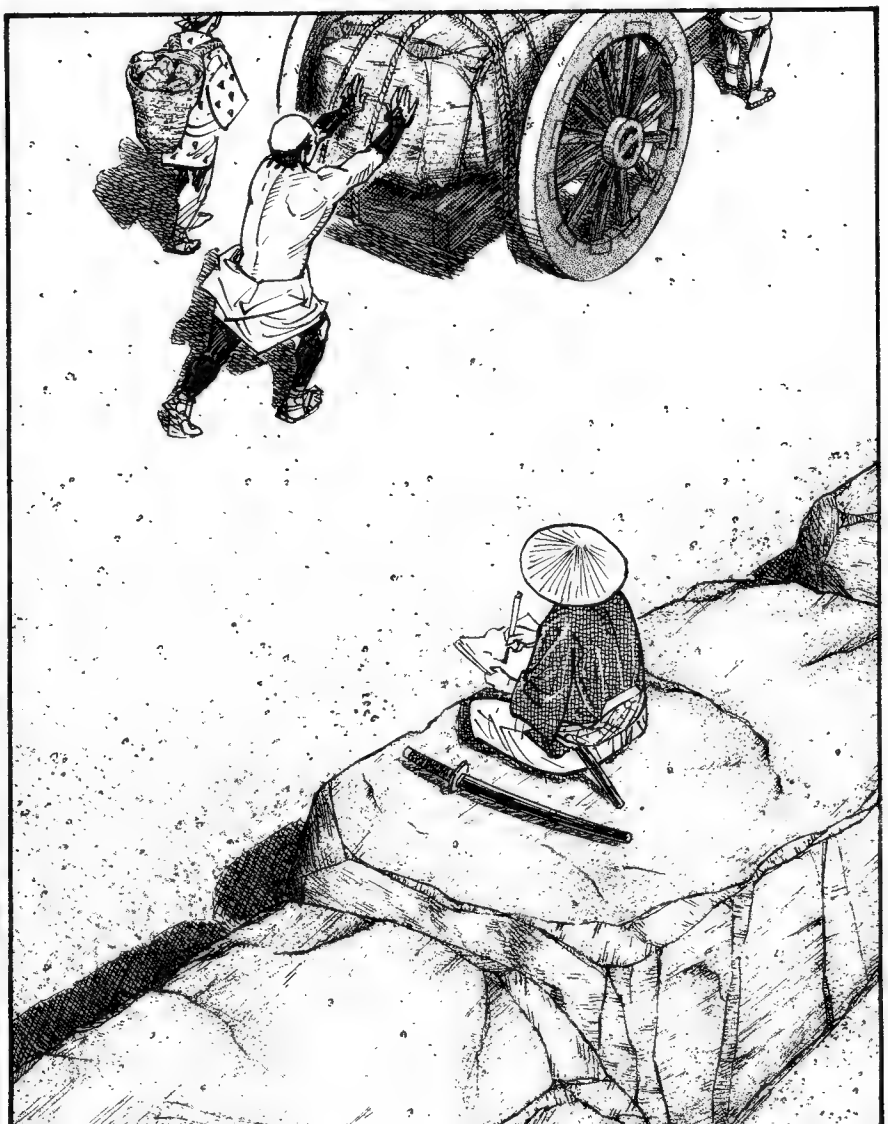



THIS HEAT IS TOO MUCH FOR--
UGH!
YOU LOOK AWFUL, WHAT'S WRONG?
HMM... ?
...
HERE'S SOME MEDICINE.
WRECH! KOFF KOF!
YES, THIS HEAT WAVE IS AWFUL...
TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH, SIR.
YOU SHOULD REST THERE FOR A WHILE LONGER...
IT'LL TAKE EFFECT SOON.


TOSS A PEBBLE TO SIGNAL ME.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU...
AND PERHAPS YOU CAN DO ME A FAVOR... GIVE ME A WARNING IF SOMEONE COMES AROUND.



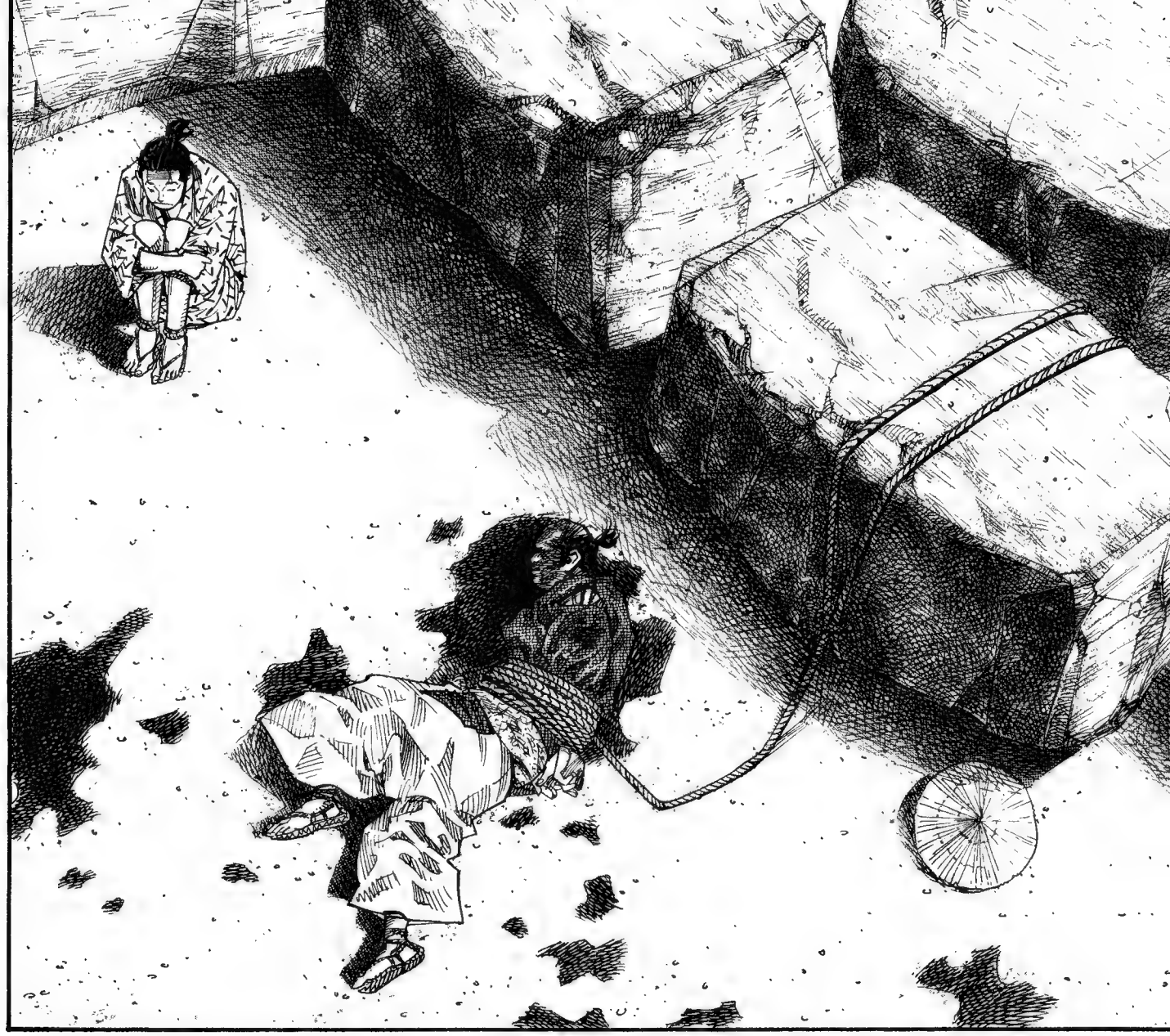




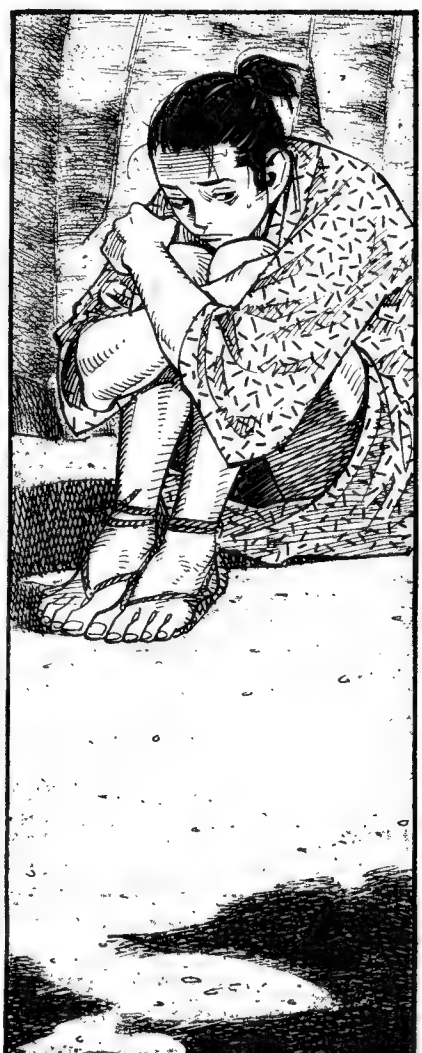


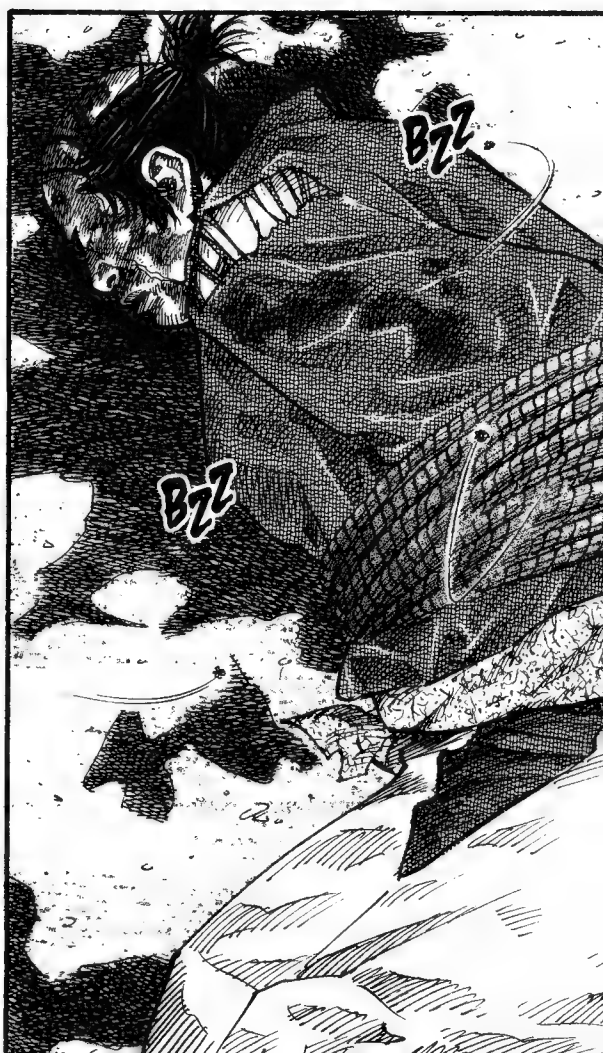

GASP!
OH, NO!
HEY...


I'M SORRY...
I'M SO SORRY...
I'M AN ERRANT SAMURAI AND SCHOLAR.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH STUDYING GEOGRAPHY AND CONSTRUCTION FOR MY OWN EDIFICATION!?
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON?
AN ENEMY SPY!
A TOYOTOMI SPY!!
FWIP
!?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
WHAT, FROM OSAKA!?
THE BASTARD!!
LET'S KILL HIM!!




WE'LL LEAVE HIM LIKE THIS UNTIL THE AUTHORITIES COME.
YOU KEEP WATCH OVER HIM.
DON'T WORRY IF HE ENDS UP DYING.




BZZ
BZZ

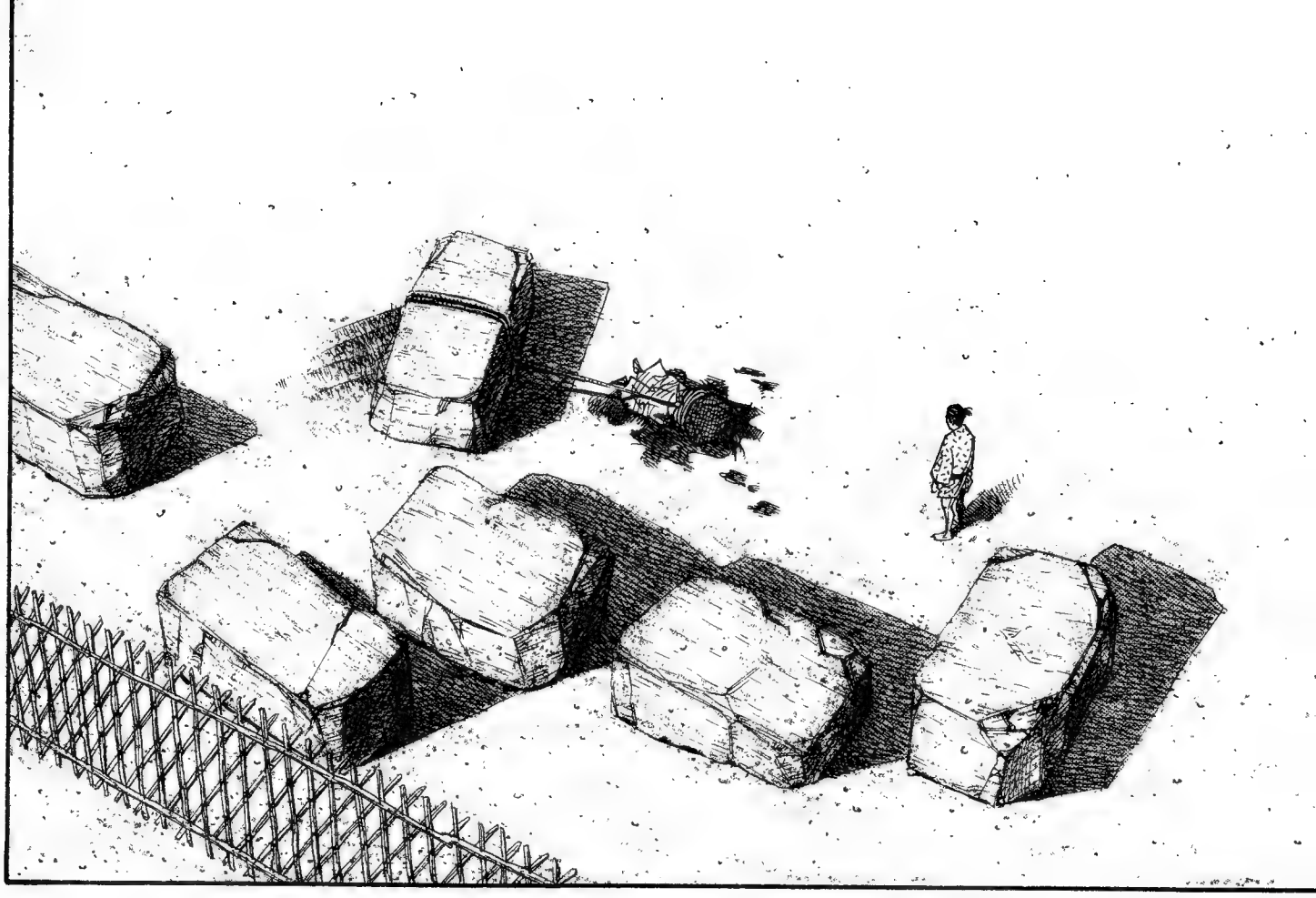

BUT HE DID TAKE FIVE MEN DOWN WITH HIM...
HE MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE A SKILLED SWORDSMAN...
HE'S DEAD...
LIFE IS TOO FLEETING...
I, MYSELF, HAVE CUT DOWN FOUR BANDITS...
AN ERRANT SAMURAI...
AND ONLY ONE OUT OF TEN THOUSAND...
...CAN HAVE ANY HOPE OF SUCCEEDING...
LEAVING YOUR HOME, YOUR PARENTS...
...ALL FOR THE SAKE OF AMBITION, GOING THROUGH HARDSHIP AND DIFFICULT TRAINING...


THE REST END UP LIKE THIS...
FWICH
FWICH
!!


FWICH


PLEASE, FORGIVE ME!!
GASP!
I'M--
I'M SORRY !!
PLEASE!!


PLE--
PLEASE...




HERE'S SOME MEDI-CINE.
YOU SHOWED ME KINDNESS, BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH I CAN DO FOR YOU NOW...

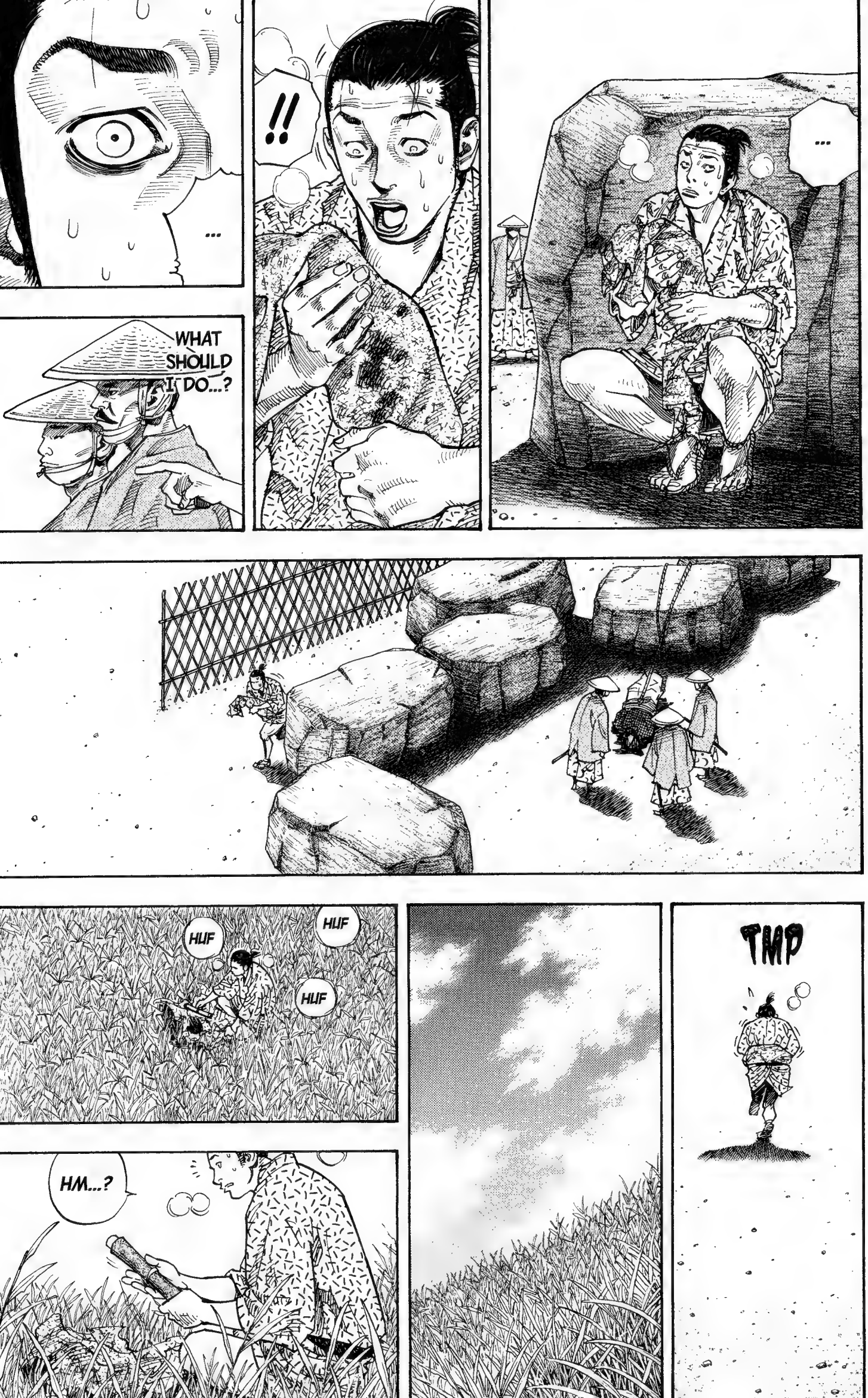

NOW HE'S REALLY DEAD.


...
"PLEASE" ...?


KRICH
KRICH

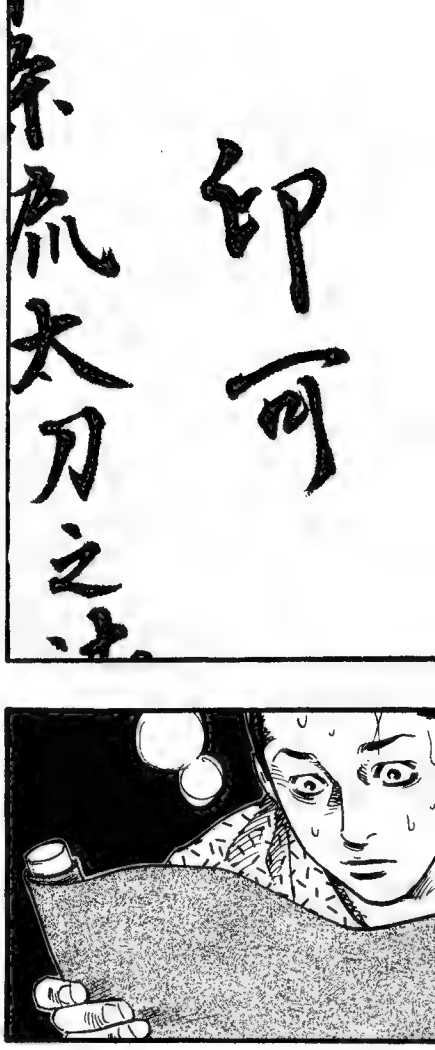

!!


THAT'S THE LEAST I COULD DO...
HMM, LET'S SEE...
MAYBE I CAN DELIVER A KEEPSAKE TO YOUR PARENTS.


...
!!
...
WHAT SHOULD I DO...?
HUF
HUF
HUF
HM...?
TMP



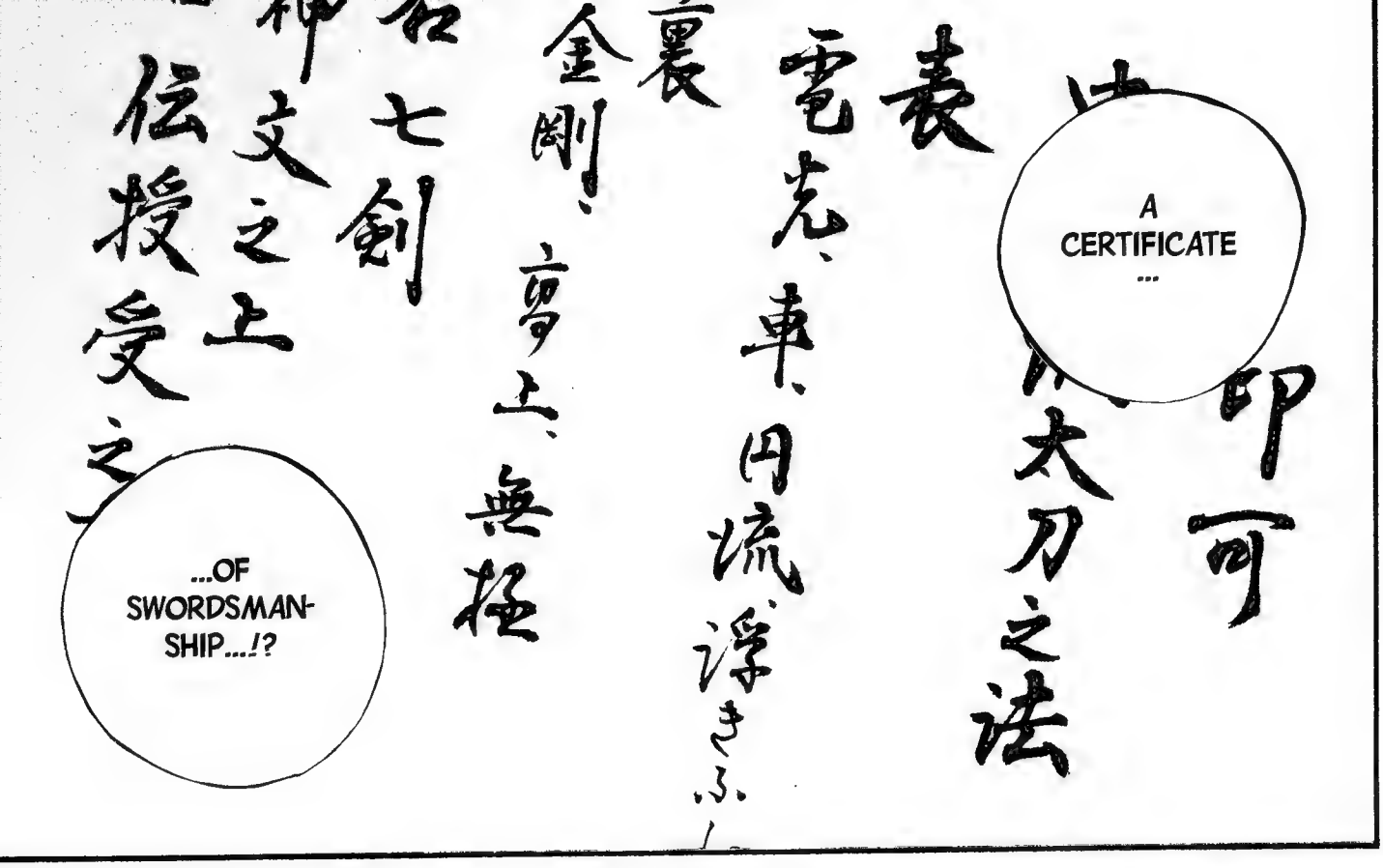

WHAT'S THIS?




(SASAKI KOJIRŌ HAS MASTERED THE FOLLOWING SECRET METHODS OF THE CHŪJŌ STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP...)


Vagabond




A CERTIFICATE ...
...OF SWORDSMANSHIP....!?


SO HE WAS SKILLED ENOUGH TO RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE IN THE CHŪJŌ STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP...
I KNEW HE WAS FORMIDABLE...


HIS NAME WAS SASAKI KOJIRŌ.
TO BE KILLED OFF LIKE THAT...
IT'S JUST HORRIBLE.
THIS CERTIFICATE IS PROOF OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.
I VOW TO DELIVER IT TO YOUR PARENTS.

BUT I SHOULD LEAVE HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

WOULDN'T WANT TO BE ARRESTED AS A THIEF.

AND THERE WAS THAT FIRE AT THE YOSHIOKA DŌJŌ...

GOT TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE.

...

FWIP

I'LL...

I'LL DELIVER *THIS* TO HIS PARENTS, AS WELL!!

KLNK

WHOA!

!

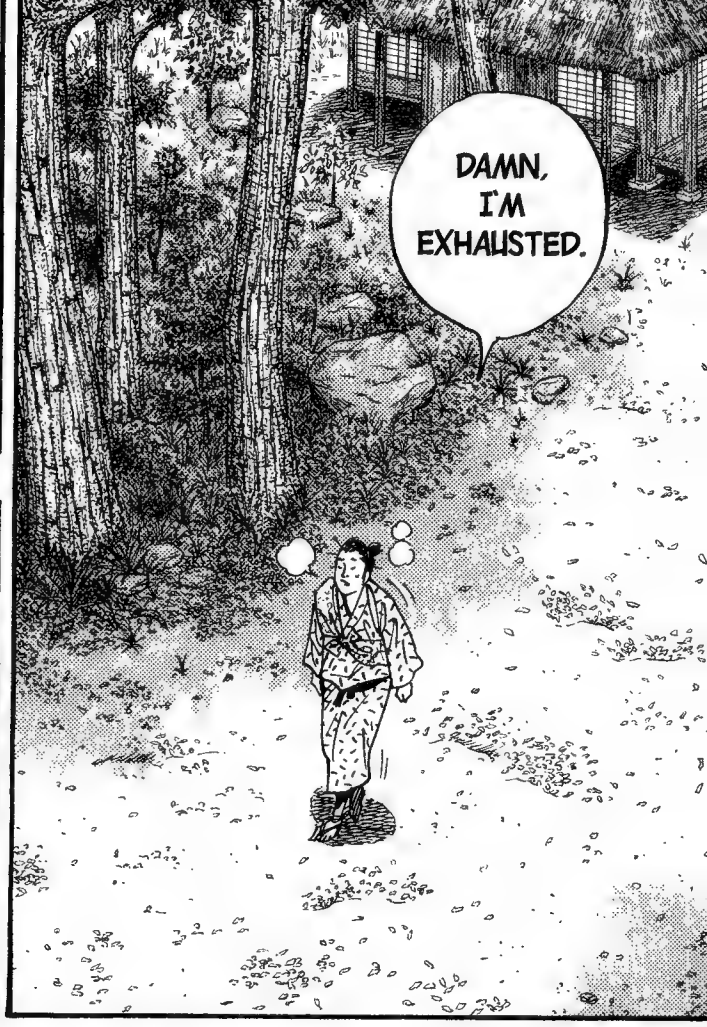
FWIP

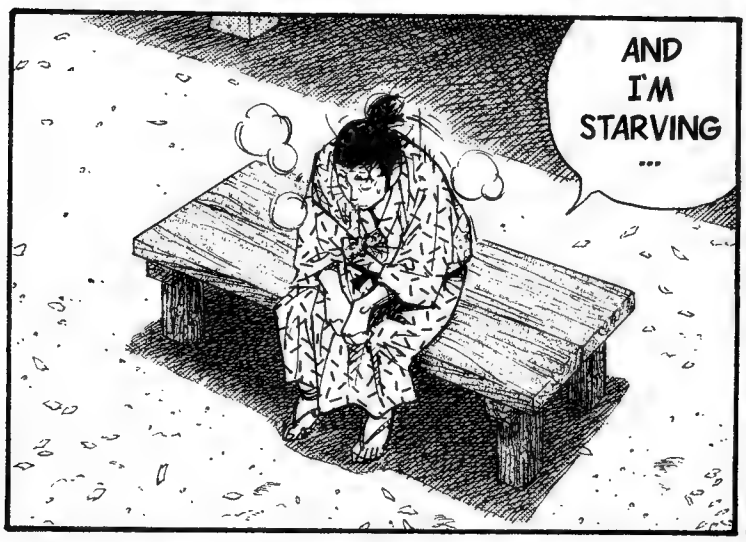
MAYBE THERE'S SOME OTHER CLUES HERE...

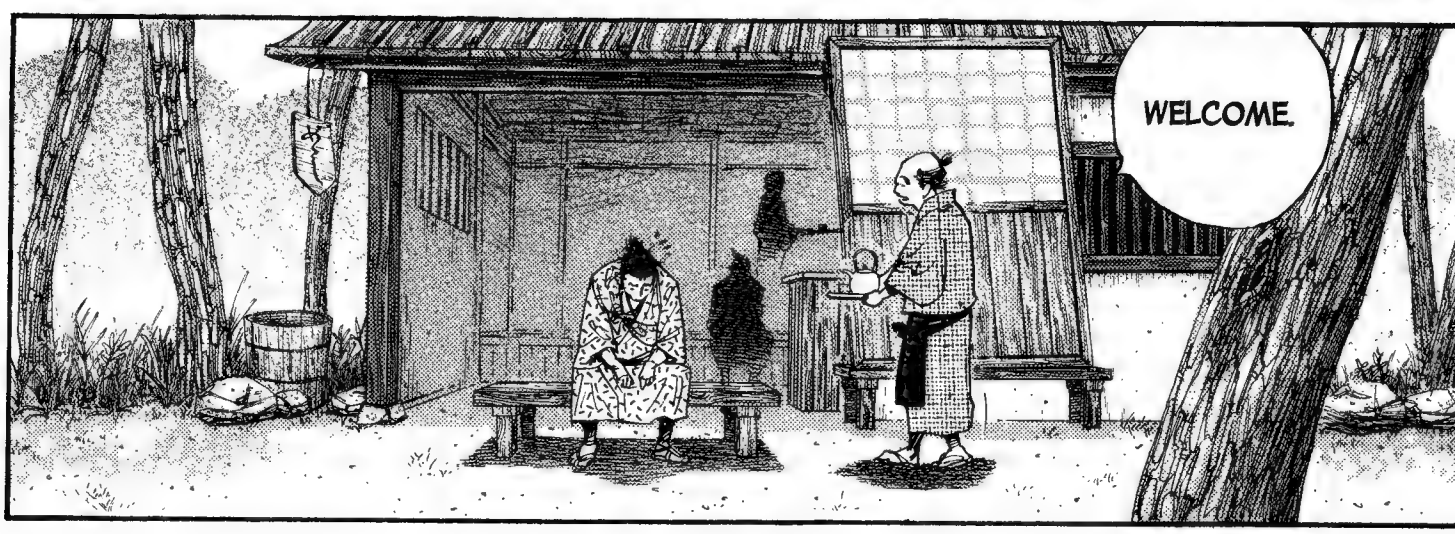
I NEED TO FIND OUT WHERE HE'S FROM...

#56 | Osaka


I'M WASTING MY TIME.
I DON'T HAVE ANY CLUES AND I'M JUST WALKING AROUND AIMLESSLY.


DAMN, I'M EXHAUSTED.


AND I'M STARVING ...

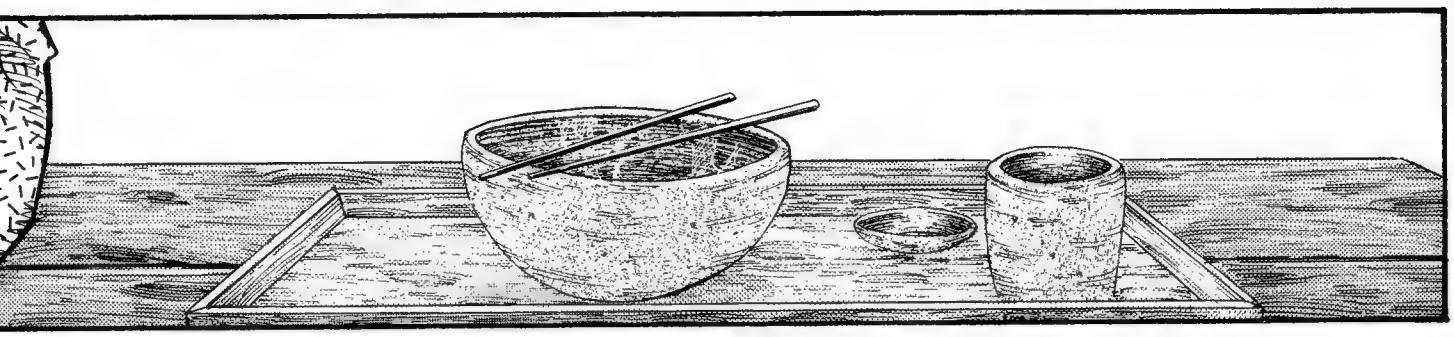

WELCOME.

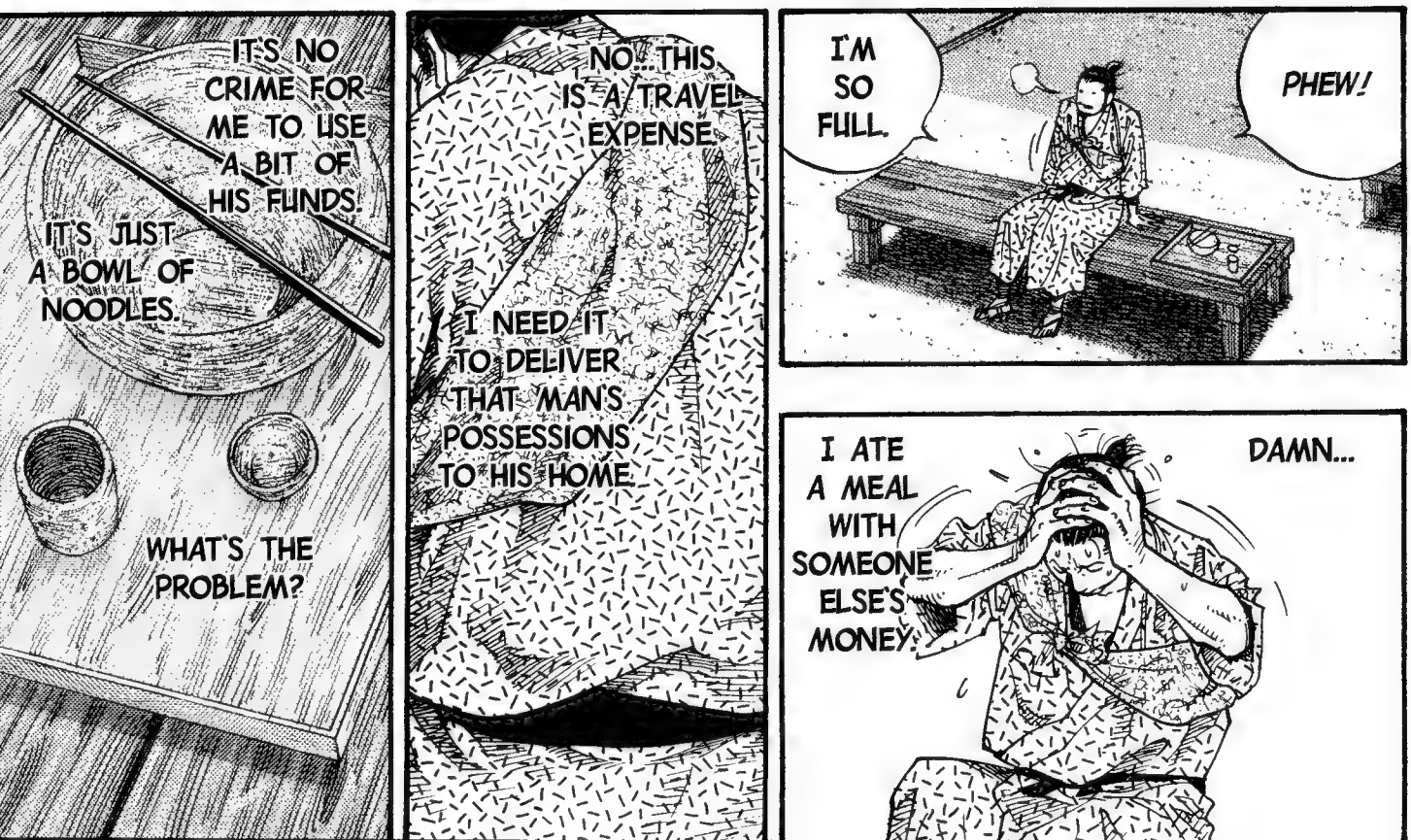



HM? KANEMAKI JISAI?


THE MASTER OF THE SWORD SCHOOL SHOULD KNOW HIS DISCIPLE'S HOME-TOWN.
I HAVE TO FIND KANEMAKI JISAI...


YOU LOOK AWFUL.
ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT ANYTHING?
ARE YOU BROKE?
I HAVEN'T HAD ANYTHING TO EAT SINCE YESTERDAY...
I KNEW IT...
CAN HE REALLY BE THAT REPUTABLE?
NO ONE KNOWS A THING ABOUT HIM.
HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE REPUTABLE MASTER OF THE TODA SEIGEN VARIATION OF THE CHŪJŌ STYLE.
EVER HEARD OF HIM?
CAN'T SAY THAT I HAVE.
WELL, NOT REALLY...
...?



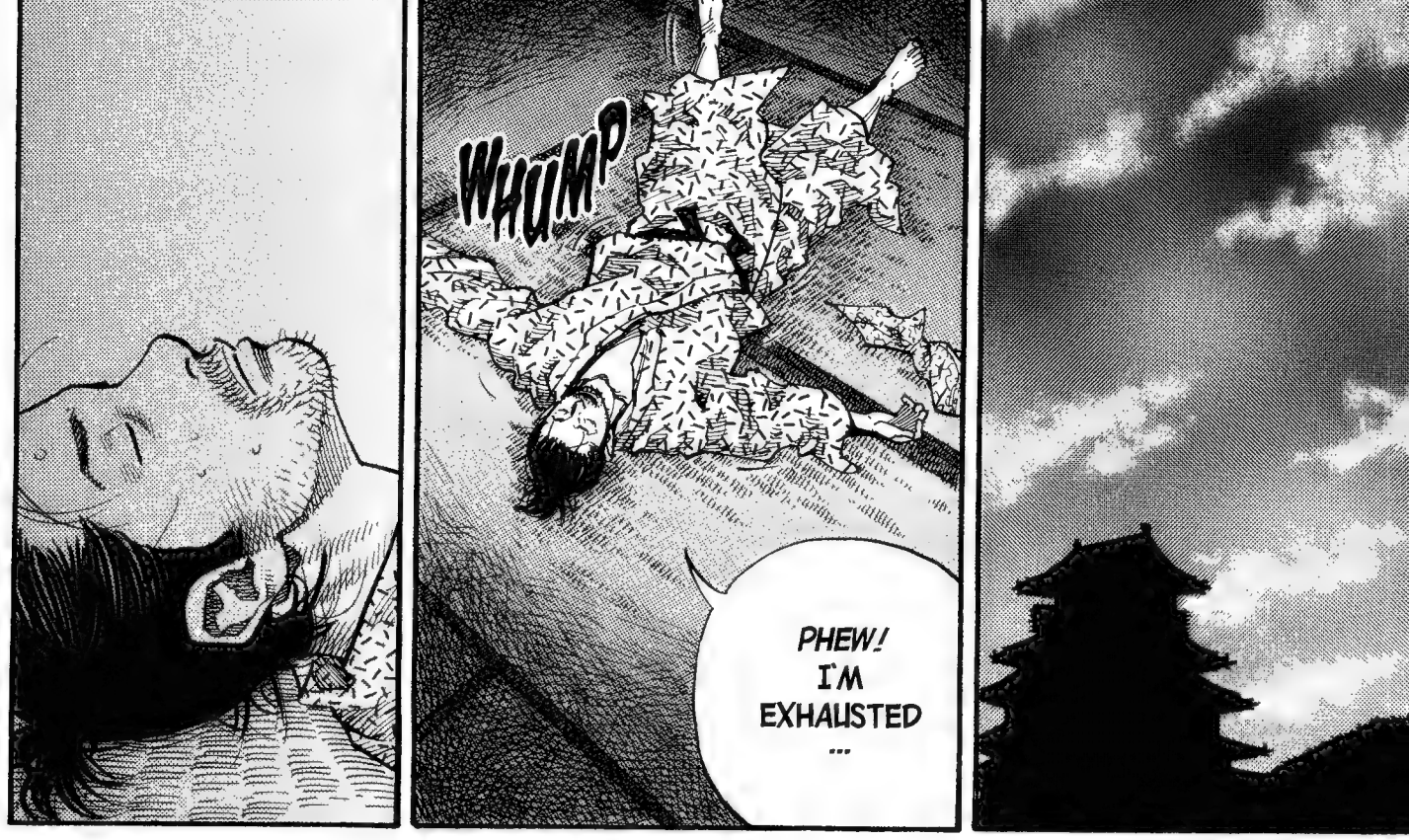

IT'S NO CRIME FOR ME TO USE A BIT OF HIS FUNDS.
IT'S JUST A BOWL OF NOODLES.
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
NO... THIS IS A TRAVEL EXPENSE.
I NEED IT TO DELIVER THAT MAN'S POSSESSIONS TO HIS HOME.
I'M SO FULL.
PHEW!
I ATE A MEAL WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S MONEY.
DAMN...


I, TOO, WANTED TO WITNESS HIS SWORDSMAN-SHIP, FIRSTHAND...
I CONTINUED TO SEEK HIM OUT UNTIL I HEARD THAT HE RETIRED TO A REMOTE VILLAGE, TO PASS HIS OLD AGE IN HERMETIC OBSCURITY.
IF IT'S KANEMAKI JISAI YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...
I THINK YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME...
HUH?


HE'S THE GRANDSON OF TODA SEIGEN. PERHAPS HE'LL HAVE SOME INFORMATION.
BUT IF YOU STILL WISH TO FIND HIM...
...I SUGGEST YOU GO TO OSAKA CASTLE AND FIND A MAN NAMED TODA MONDONOSHŌ.

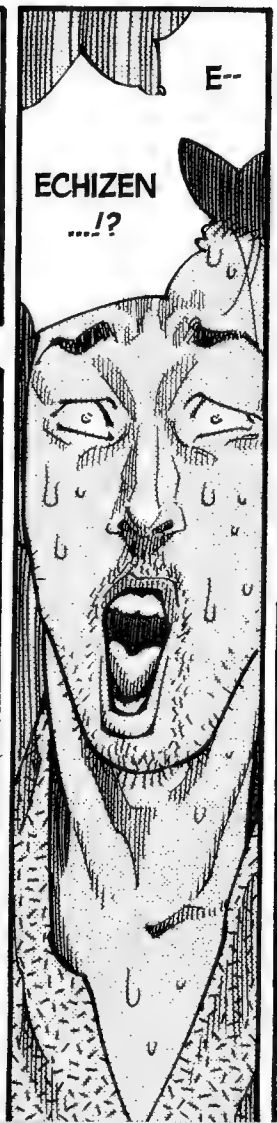

OSAKA!

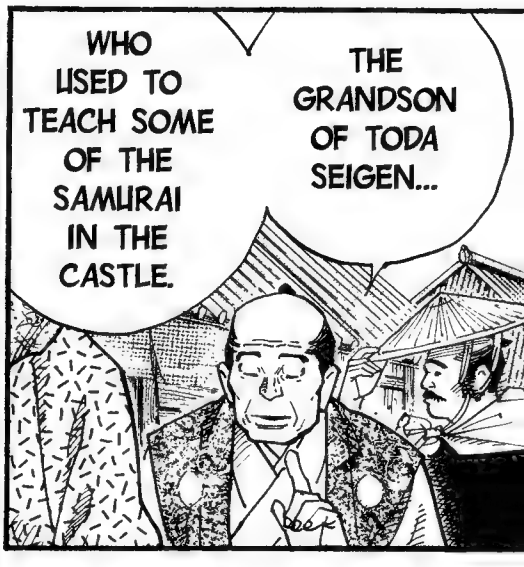

OSAKA
CASTLE...


WHUMP
PHEW! I'M EXHAUSTED ...


YES, OF COURSE...
TODA MONDONOSHŌ ...


FWOM
I KEEP HAVING TO TRAVEL FARTHER AND FARTHER....


E--
ECHIZEN ...!?


WHO USED TO TEACH SOME OF THE SAMURAI IN THE CASTLE.
THE GRANDSON OF TODA SEIGEN...

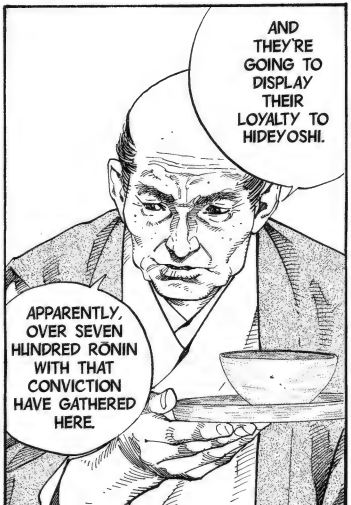

IF YOU WANT TO FIND OUT ABOUT KANEMAKI JISAI THEN YOU MIGHT BE BETTER OFF LOOKING FOR ITŌ ITTŌSAI.
WHY WOULD I WANT TO DO THAT?
HE'S THE FOUNDER OF THE ITTŌ RYŪ STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP. EVEN I KNOW THAT.


USED TO TEACH?
THAT'S RIGHT. HE RETURNED TO ECHIZEN SEVERAL YEARS AGO.

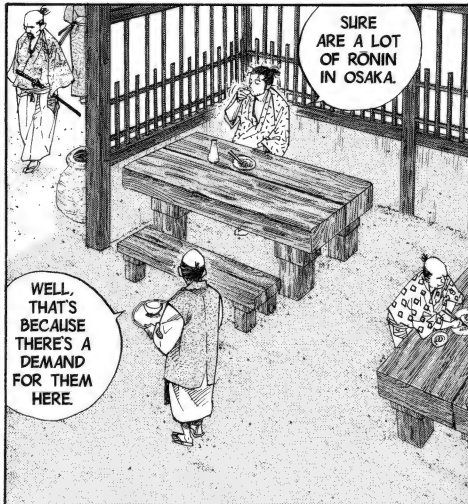

...!!
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR HIM AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT?
ITTŌSAI STUDIED UNDER KANEMAKI JISAI.
WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO...?
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
NO POINT IN RUSHING THOUGH...
I'M NEVER GOING TO FIND ANY OF THEM.
HOWEVER...
ITŌ ITTŌSAI WAS LAST KNOWN TO HAVE RETIRED IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF SHIRAKAWA.
BUT FROM THERE, HE DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE.
ZZZ
ZZZ

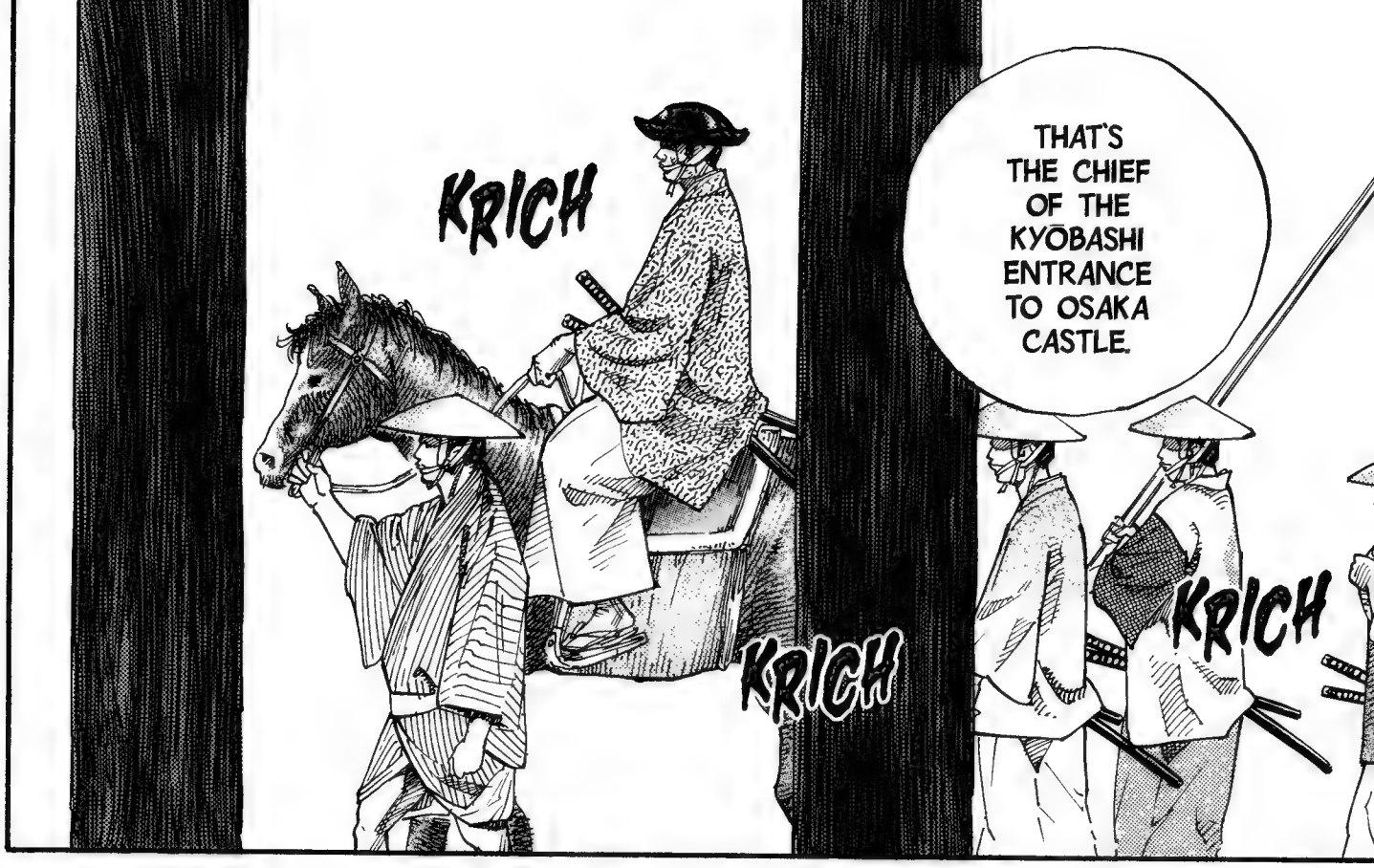



REALLY!?
TAKE A LOOK FOR YOURSELF.


AND THEY'RE GOING TO DISPLAY THEIR LOYALTY TO HIDEYOSHI.
APPARENTLY, OVER SEVEN HUNDRED RŌNIN WITH THAT CONVICTION HAVE GATHERED HERE.


TOKUGAWA MIGHT RULE THE COUNTRY NOW...
BUT THEY SAY OSAKA CASTLE IS SECRETLY ASSEMBLING A TROOP OF RŌNIN...
THEY'RE PREPARING FOR BATTLE...


SURE ARE A LOT OF RŌNIN IN OSAKA.
WELL, THAT'S BECAUSE THERE'S A DEMAND FOR THEM HERE.


KRICH
KRICH
THAT'S THE CHIEF OF THE KYŌBASHI ENTRANCE TO OSAKA CASTLE.
KRICH


I WAS LUGGING STONES AT FUSHIMI CASTLE JUST THE OTHER DAY...
THAT'S NO DIFFERENT FROM ME!


REALLY ...!?
WHEN THEY WERE DREDGING THE JUNKEI MOAT, HE WAS JUST ANOTHER RŌNIN...
...HAULING DIRT.


I CAN DO IT!!
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO MAKE SOMETHING OF MYSELF.


THIS IS IT...!!


FWICH
呉服物品々


KLNK
BUT THERE'S STILL A LOT LEFT...
COME AGAIN, SIR!
SORRY, KOJIRŌ...I SPENT SOME MORE OF YOUR MONEY.
THINGS ARE JUST BEGINNING FOR ME.
MY LUCK IS FINALLY CHANGING!!
FWIP
AH, DOESN'T MATTER. A MAN WITH AMBITION HAS TO HAVE A DRINK, EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.
DELICIOUS!
FIP
PHEW.
HEY, DIDN'T I QUIT DRINKING ...?
FWIP
...


SMIRK
YOU DRINK YOUR SAKE WITH SUCH RELISH...
PARDON MY RUDENESS!
CAN I HELP YOU?
HUH ...?
HOW ABOUT JOINING ME FOR A DRINK?
HEY, WAITER! WHERE'S MY BOTTLE!?
...WHILE YOU WAIT FOR YOURS?
WHY, THANK YOU.


HE MUST BE A RŌNIN, TOO...
HE SURE CAN DRINK A LOT...
NOW, *THIS* IS A BOLD MAN.


TAKEZŌ COULDN'T DRINK AT ALL.
PHEW! I DRANK TOO MUCH.

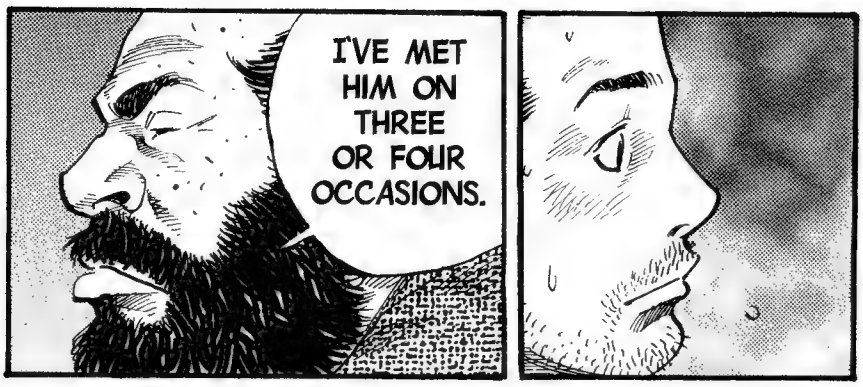

YOU'LL SEE, TAKEZŌ!!
IN OSAKA!!

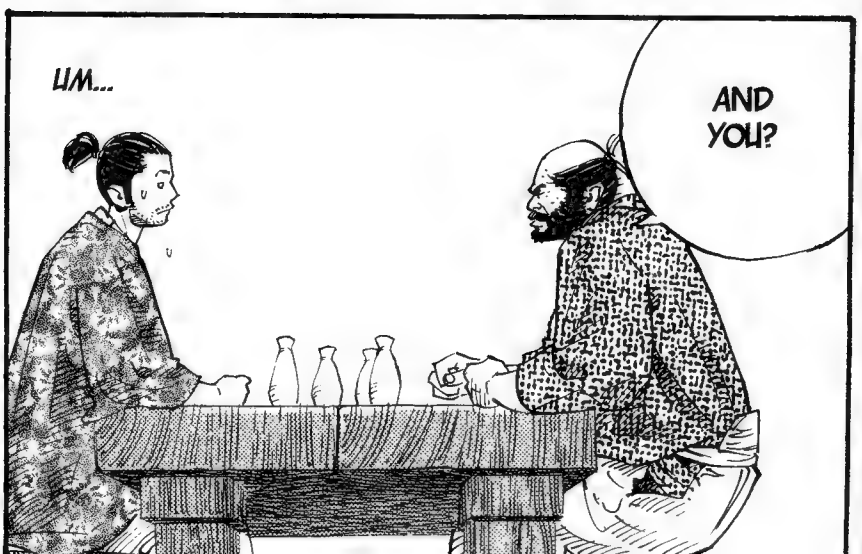

I WONDER IF HE'S STILL IN NARA...?
I'LL MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF HERE...

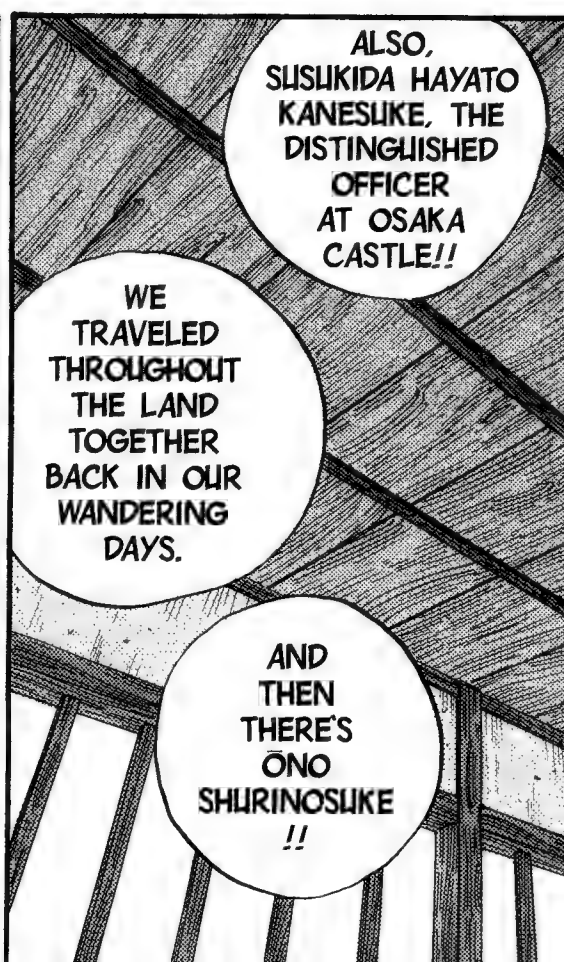

...IF THERE WAS A WAR RIGHT NOW, WHICH SIDE WOULD YOU FIGHT ON?
HEY...
THAT DAMN IEYASU!!
FWIP
HE HAS THE NERVE TO IGNORE HIDEYORI...
HE CALLS HIMSELF ŌGOSHO--THE GREAT LEADER! HE'S A COLD CONNIVING BASTARD.
OSAKA...
AND SO WHAT FIEF ARE YOU FROM?
OH, HOW RUDE OF ME... PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF...
TUGG
MY BROTHER!!


I AM AKAKABE YASOMA, RŌNIN FROM GAMŌ.


HE IS A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE.
HUH?
UH...
HUH?
FWOM
SURELY, YOU'VE HEARD OF BAN DAN'EMON?


I'VE MET HIM ON THREE OR FOUR OCCASIONS.


UM...
AND YOU?


ALSO, SUSUKIDA HAYATO KANESUKE, THE DISTINGUISHED OFFICER AT OSAKA CASTLE!!
WE TRAVELED THROUGHOUT THE LAND TOGETHER BACK IN OUR WANDERING DAYS.
AND THEN THERE'S ŌNO SHURINOSUKE !!


THE CHŪJŌ-RYŪ.
...
HE'S FROM JŌKYŌJI VILLAGE IN ISAKA-NO-SHŌ IN THE PROVINCE OF ECHIZEN. HE'S THE MASTER OF THE--
YOU MUST HAVE HEARD OF...
TODA SEIGEN...
...
HE IN-CORPORATED THE CHŪJŌ STYLE INTO HIS OWN.
YOU MUST ALSO HAVE HEARD OF MASTER KANEMAKI JISAI...
THEN SURELY...
WELL...
KANEMAKI JISAI...SOUNDS FAMILIAR, BUT MAYBE NOT...
AND YOU ARE...?
SO YOU STUDY SWORDS-MANSHIP?
THAT'S RIGHT.


KANEMAKI JISAI'S DISCIPLE, SASAKI KOJIRŌ...


!?




...I'M THE MAN DELIVERING SASAKI'S POSSESSIONS TO HIS FAMILY, THAT IS TO SAY.

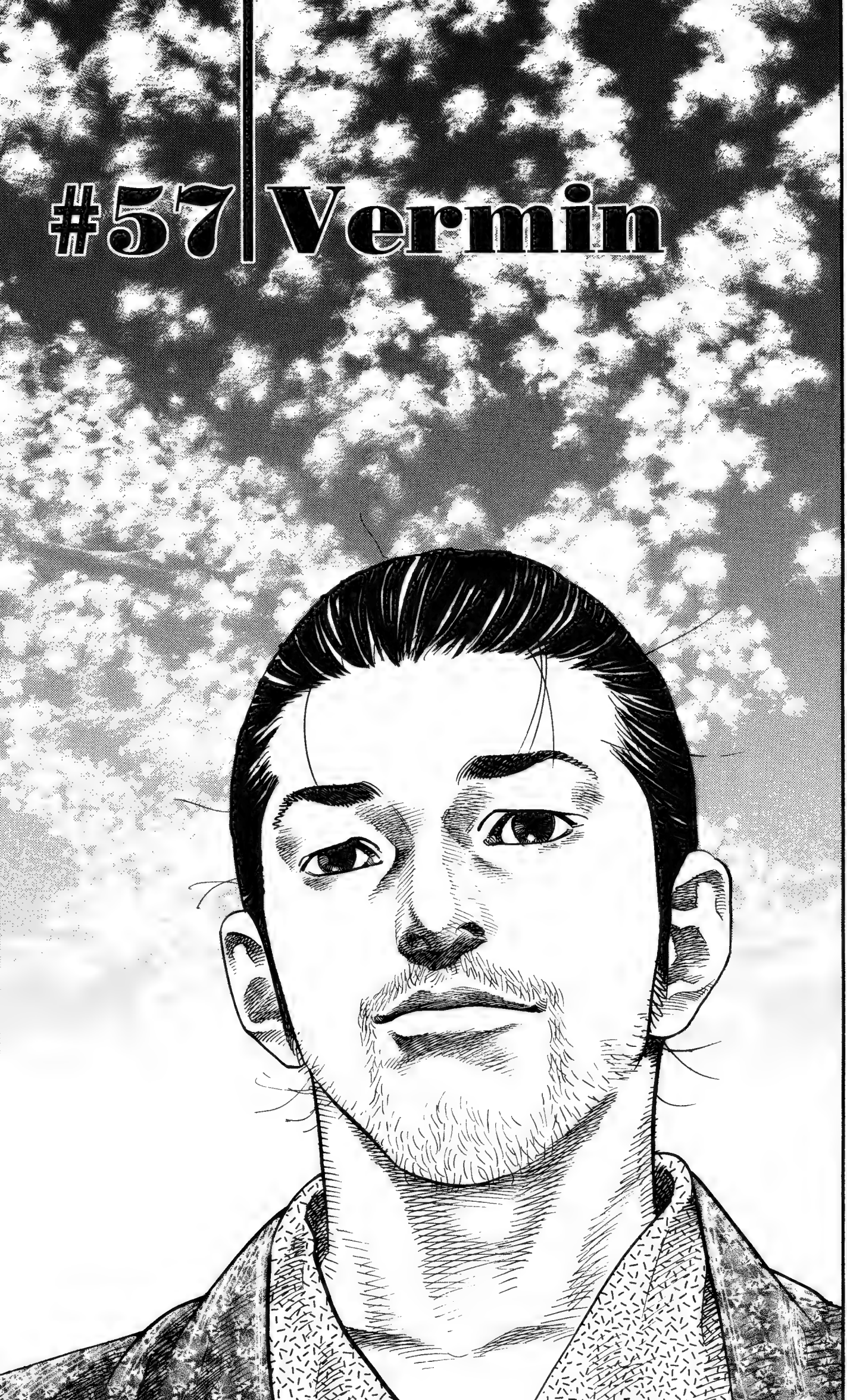

Vagabond

(FWIP)

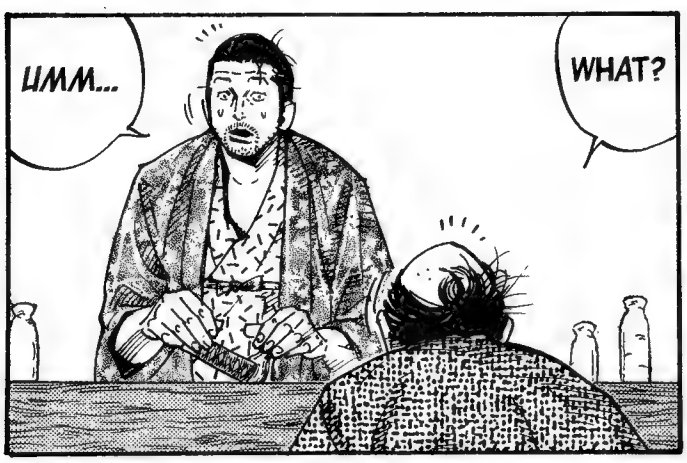


(A MAN WHO LOOKS GOOD DRINKING LIQUOR)

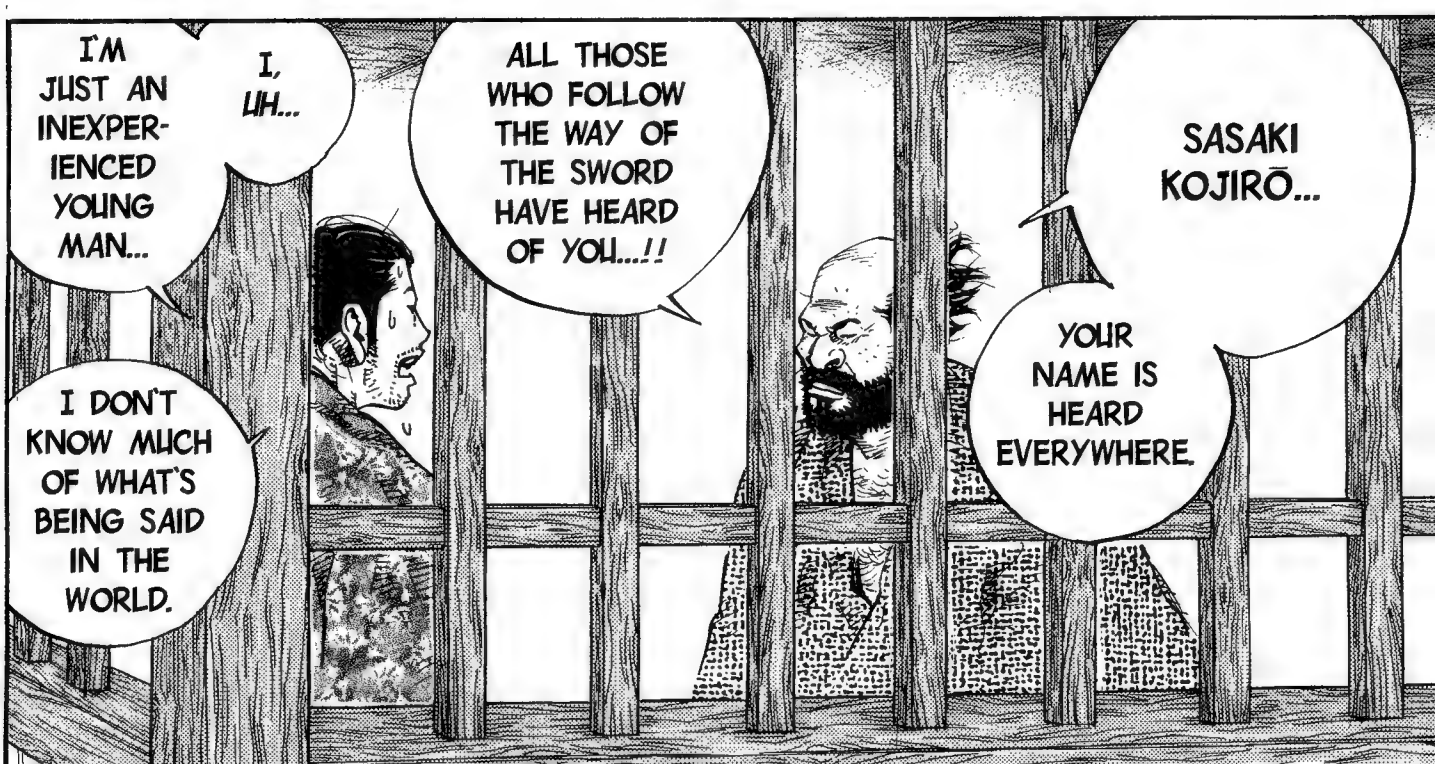
#57 Vermin



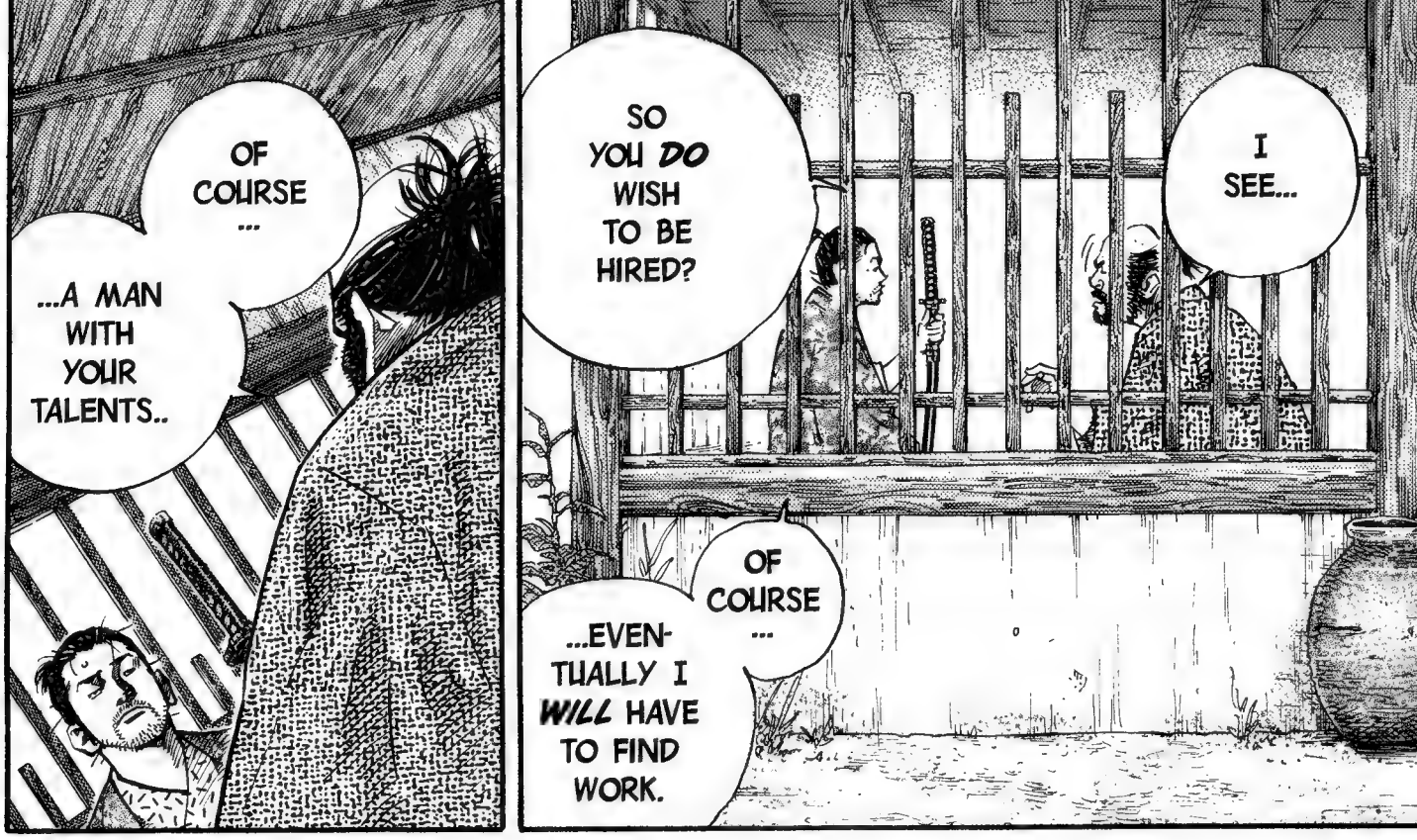

UH...
FORGIVE ME!!
SASAKI KOJIRŌ, I HAD NO IDEA WHO YOU WERE... AND HERE I AM BOASTING AND SHOOTING MY MOUTH OFF...!!
I APOLOGIZE FOR MY INSOLENCE!


UMM...
WHAT?

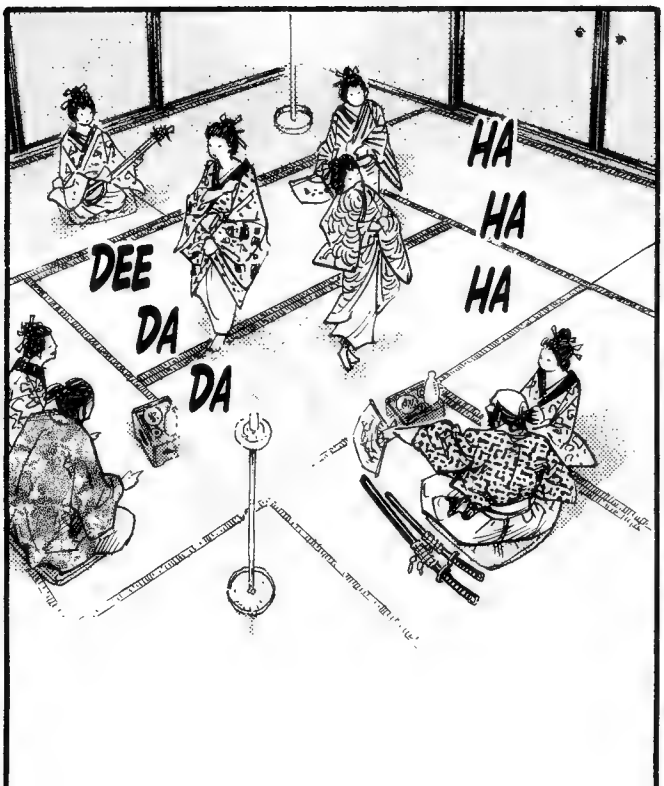

IS THE NAME SO WELL-KNOWN?

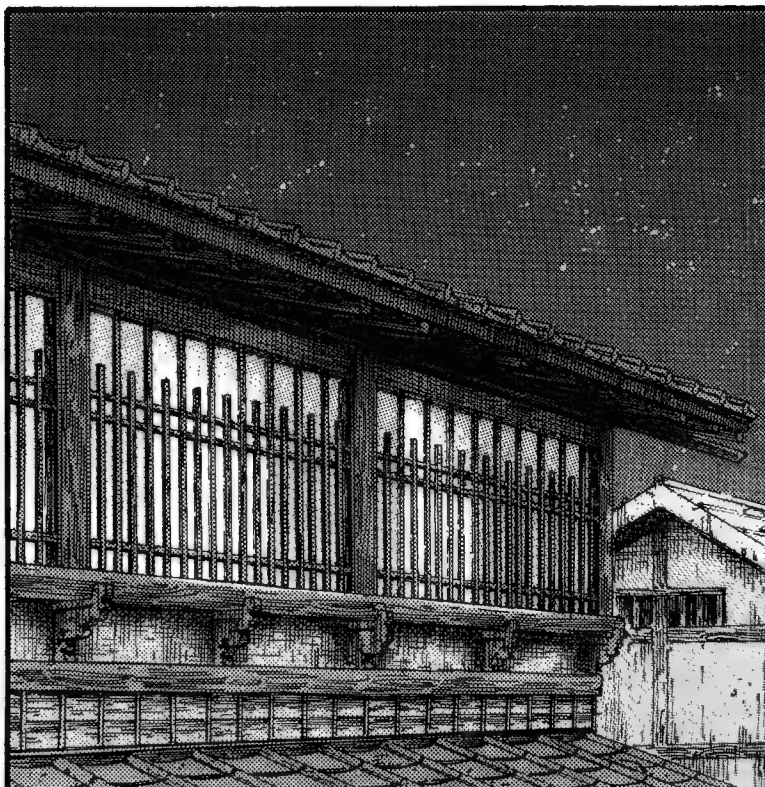

I'M JUST AN INEXPER-IENCED YOUNG MAN...
I, UH...
ALL THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE WAY OF THE SWORD HAVE HEARD OF YOU...!!
SASAKI KOJIRŌ...
I DON'T KNOW MUCH OF WHAT'S BEING SAID IN THE WORLD.
YOUR NAME IS HEARD EVERYWHERE.


AND YET YOU ARE STILL UNEMPLOYED ?
THERE MUST BE PLENTY OF LORDS WHO'D HIRE YOU IMMEDIATELY.
NOW, WHAT DO I DO...?
AH... IT IS OFTEN SO FOR THOSE WITH TALENT...
YOUR MODESTY DOES NOTHING TO HIDE YOUR ABILITIES.
AN OUTCAST ?
UH-OH...
...I'VE BEEN SORT OF AN OUTCAST.
WELL, YOU SEE... FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS...
I MEAN, I'VE BEEN DEDICATING MY LIFE TO THE WAY OF THE SWORD.


OF COURSE ...
...A MAN WITH YOUR TALENTS..
SO YOU *DO* WISH TO BE HIRED?
I SEE...
OF COURSE ...
...EVENTUALLY I *WILL* HAVE TO FIND WORK.


ALLOW ME TO HELP YOU!
FWP

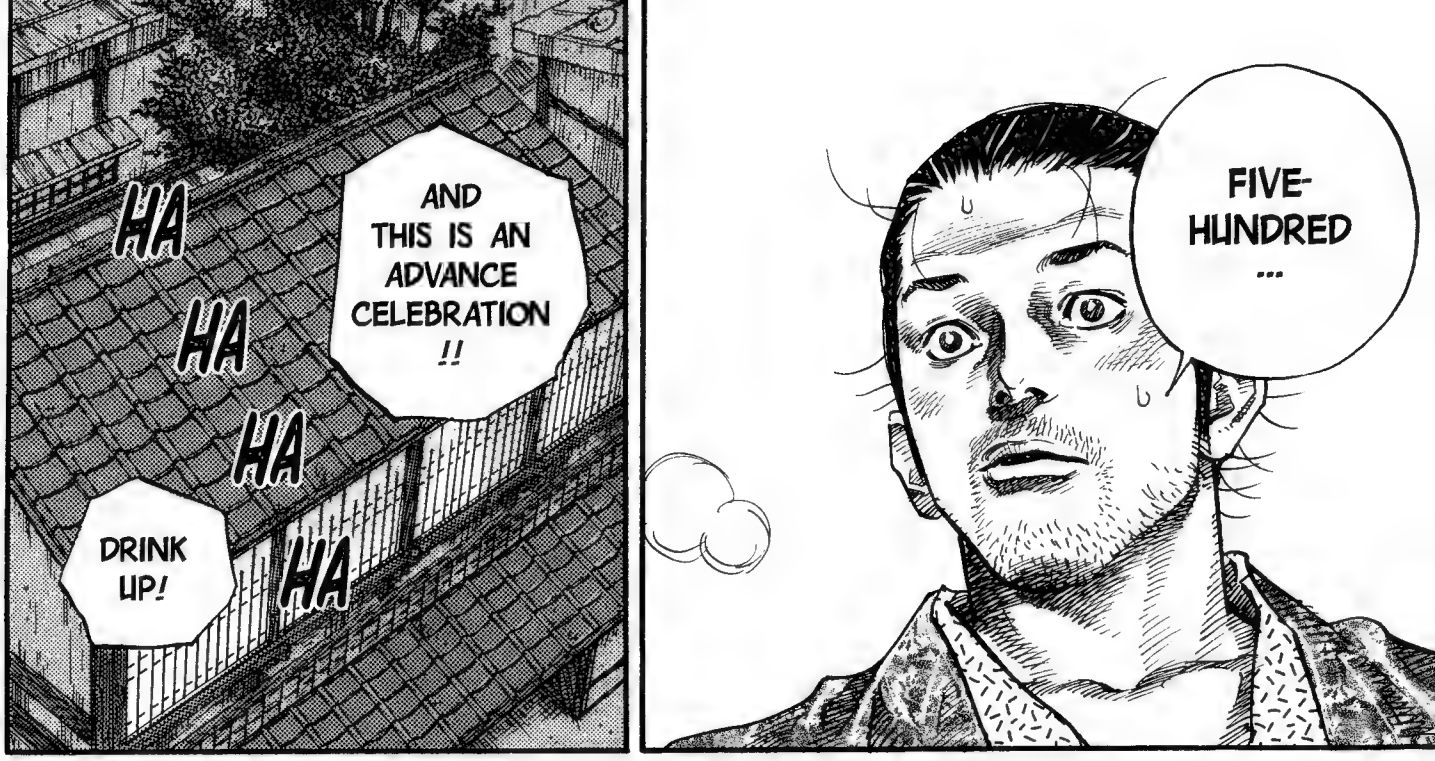

DEE DA DA
HA HA HA



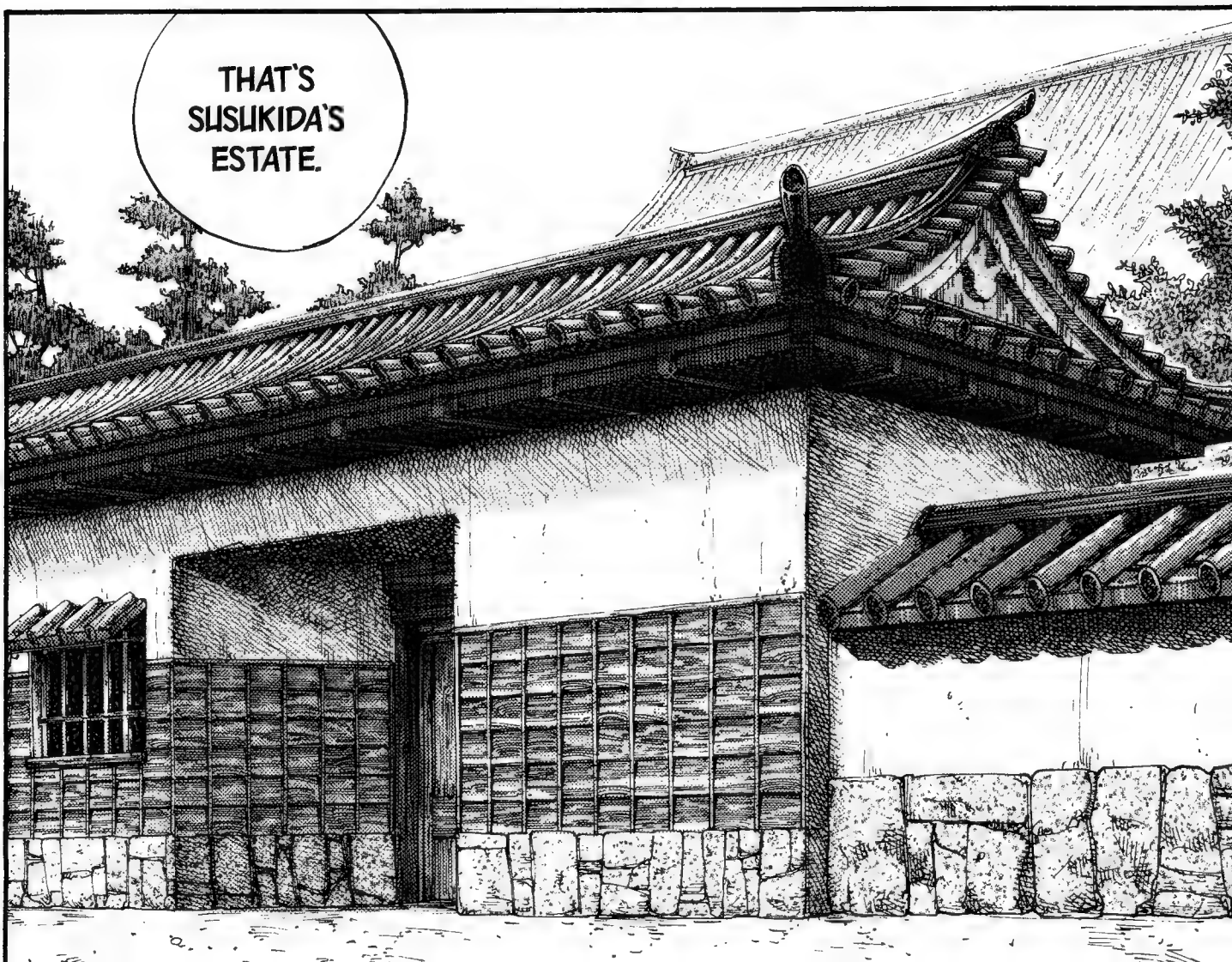

...


HM?
I'M SURE I WON'T BE PAID MUCH, INITIALLY.

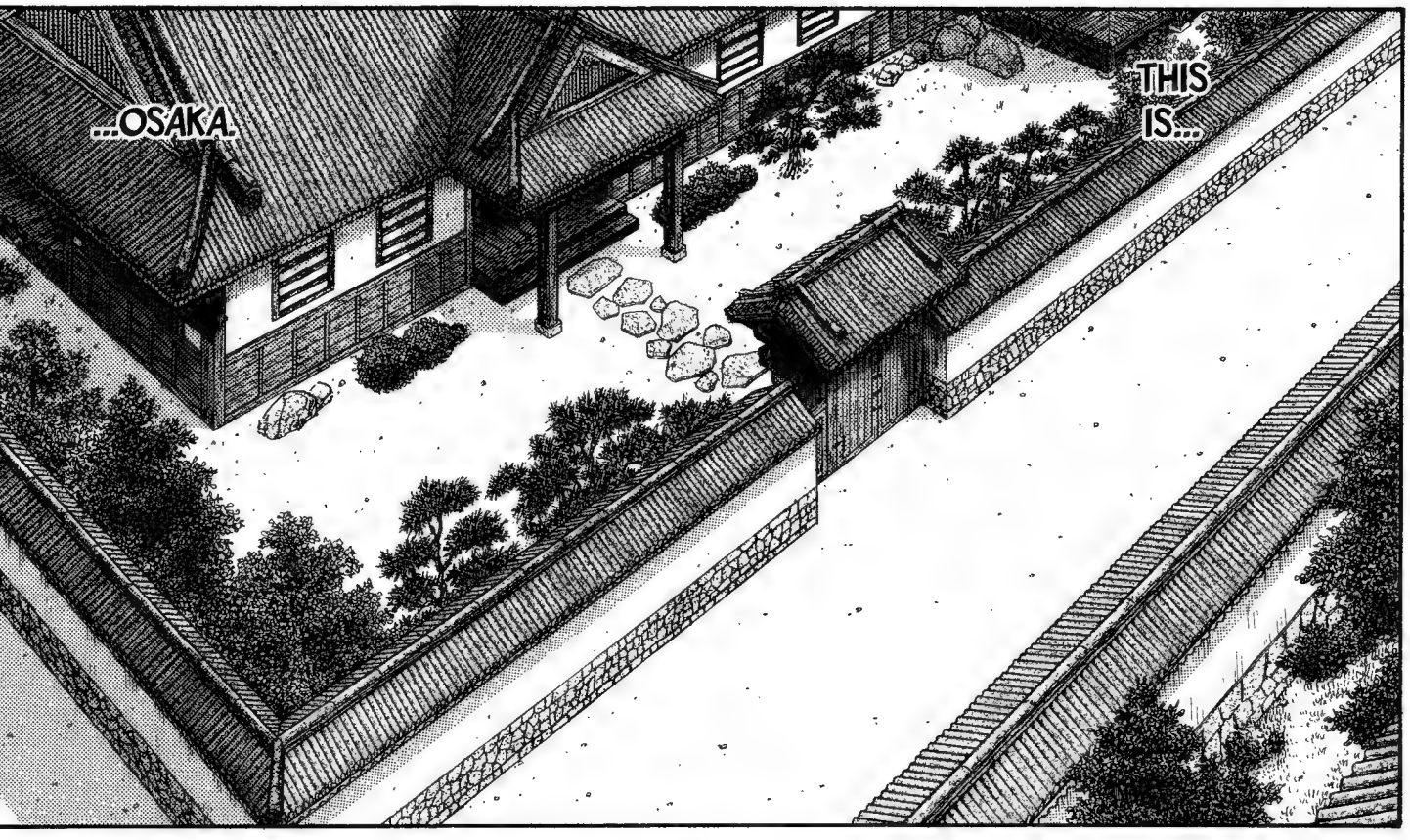

THE MORE ABILITY YOU HAVE, THE MORE BOLD YOU SHOULD BE.
LET'S SEE...WE'LL ASK THEM FOR FIVE-HUNDRED KOKU.
ACTUALLY, I'M HON'IDEN MATAHACHI.
...
DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT!
THAT'S NO GOOD, SASAKI!!
YOU'RE THE MIGHTY SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!


HA
HA
HA
HA
AND THIS IS AN ADVANCE CELEBRATION !!
DRINK UP!
FIVE-HUNDRED ...




THAT'S SUSUKIDA'S ESTATE.


WHEN HE WAS THIRTY, NO ONE HAD EVER HEARD OF SUSUKIDA KANESUKE...
BUT NOW, ALL THAT'S CHANGED...
...
HOW EXTRAVAGANT.
HE'S REALLY MADE A NAME FOR HIMSELF!!


...OSAKA.
THIS IS...


I'LL MAKE IT TOO, EVENTUALLY...!!

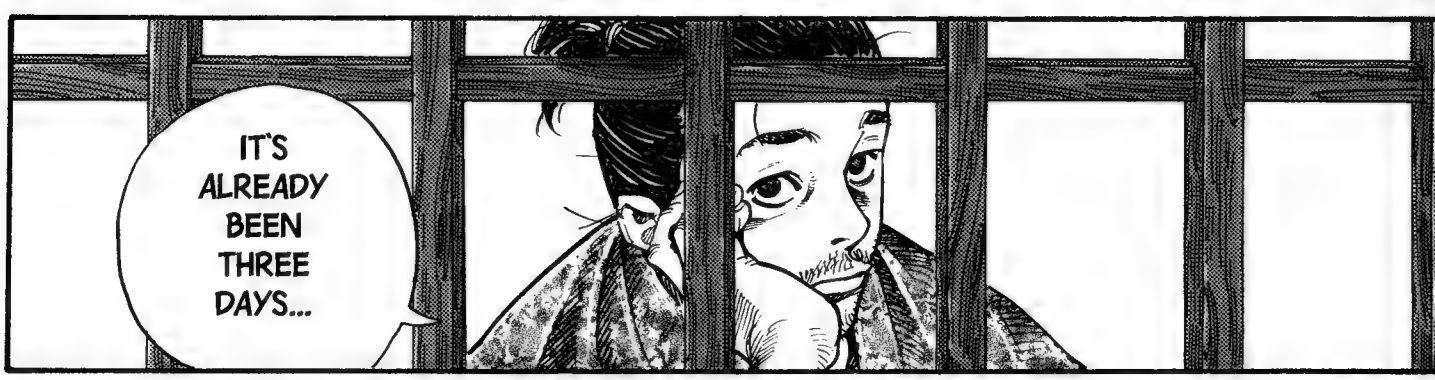

ALL RIGHT THEN, I'LL GO TELL HIM ABOUT YOU!
KRICH
OH...
I'LL NEED THAT MONEY.


I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU YASOMA.
OH, RIGHT!
THE RECOMMEND-ATION FEE- IT'S A RECENTLY DEVELOPED CUSTOM.
I'LL HAVE TO GIVE IT TO THEM.
IS THIS ENOUGH ?
YES, THAT SHOULD DO.
I'VE ALREADY USED SO MUCH OF IT. BUT *THIS* IS IMPORTANT...


...
IT'S NOT A PROBLEM.
I MEAN, WITH A REPUTATION LIKE YOURS!!
I'M USING SOMEONE ELSE'S NAME TO LAUNCH MY CAREER...
...BUT THIS IS JUST A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY.
KRICH
KRICH
OKAY, I'LL MEET YOU TOMORROW AT THE TAVERN!!
AND IN THE UNLIKELY CASE THAT SUSUKIDA REFUSES, I'LL JUST LEAVE WITHOUT GIVING HIM THE MONEY.
AND THEN I CAN STILL GO AND SEE PLENTY OF OTHER PEOPLE, LIKE ŌNO OR GOTŌ.
I AM GOING TO MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF...!!
THAT'S RIGHT. I'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE MYSELF AS GREAT AS THE NAME I'M USING.






IT'S ALREADY BEEN THREE DAYS...


ACTUALLY, YES.
THERE MUST BE A REASON HE HASN'T COME.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
BUT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR DAYS NOW.

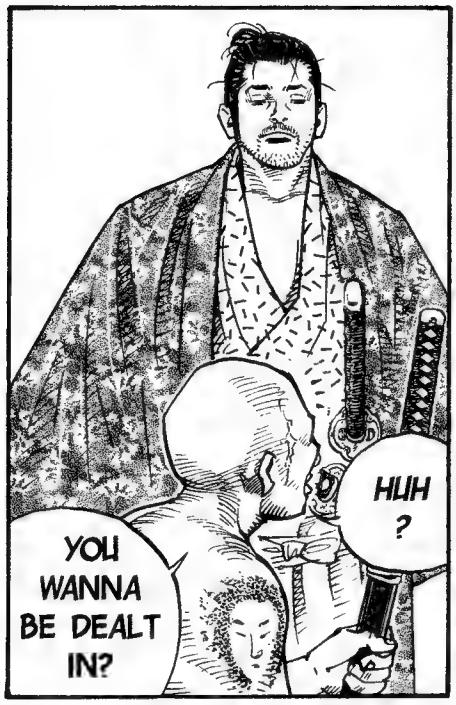

YOU'VE BEEN HERE EVERY DAY, AND YOU JUST SIT THERE...
ARE YOU WAITING FOR SOMEONE ?

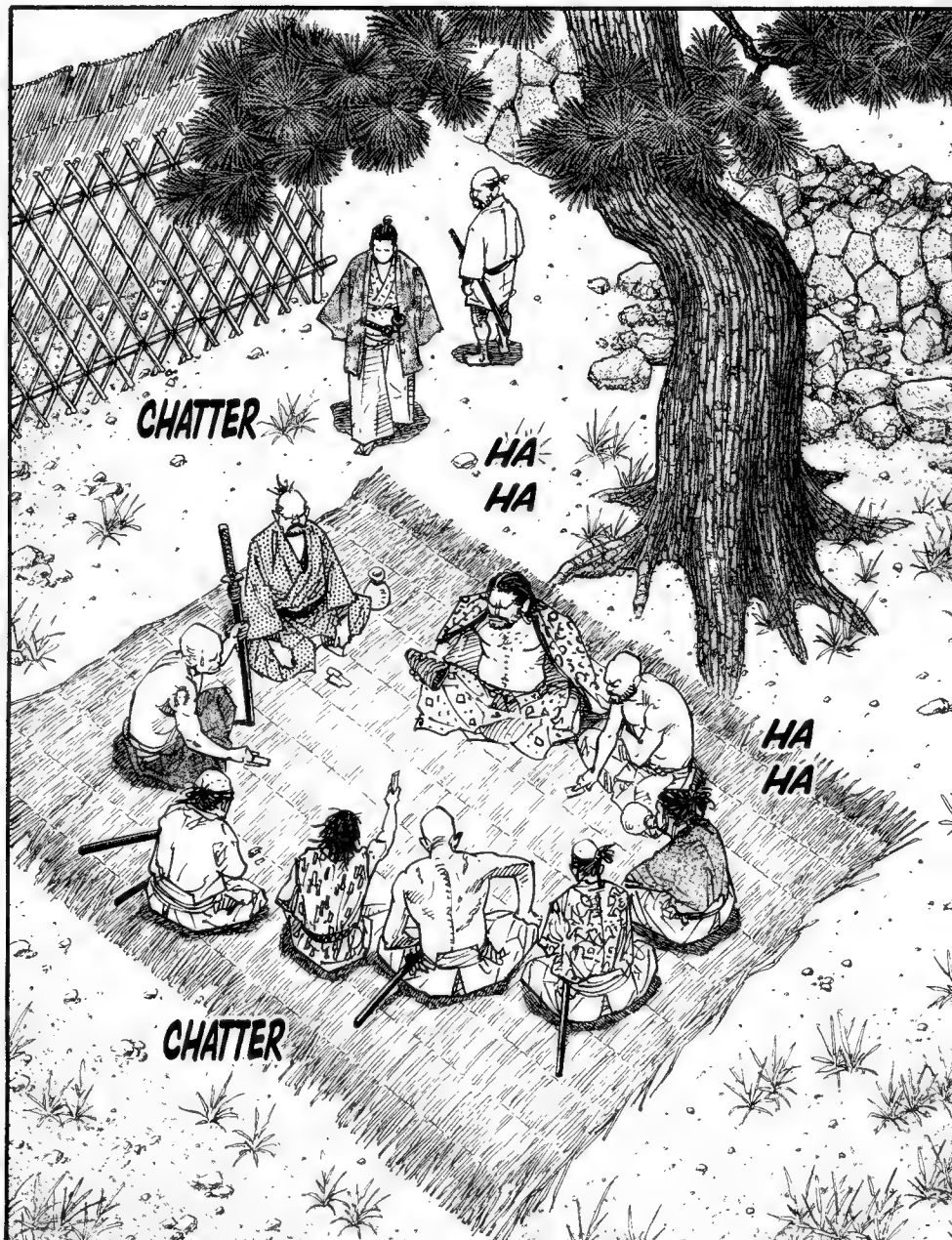

MAYBE NOBODY WANTED TO HIRE ME...

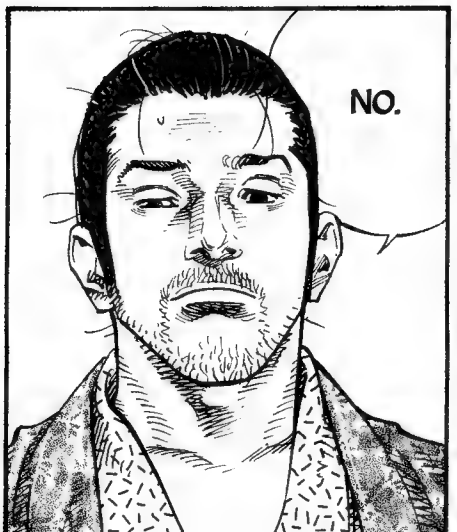

...


HE SAID HE WOULD FIND YOU A POSITION SOMEWHERE !?
HE STOLE YOUR MONEY!!
NO...
WHAT!?
THAT GUY!?
THAT'S THE RECOMMENDATION FEE I GAVE HIM--IT'S A RECENT CUSTOM.
HE DIDN'T TAKE MY MONEY.
WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT!?
OH MY! YOU'VE BEEN HAD!
WHAT'RE YOU SAYING !?
WHAT --!?




HUH ?
YOU WANNA BE DEALT IN?


CHATTER
HA HA
HA HA
CHATTER


NO.


I SEE.
HM... AKAKABE?
HAVEN'T SEEN HIM AROUND LATELY.
I'M LOOKING FOR AKAKABE YASOMA.
I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.
WHAT !?
GASP!
HOLD ON...
EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T PLAY, YOU HAVE TO PAY YOUR ADMISSION FEE!!
WAIT A MINUTE.
KRICH
WHAT!?
YOU MUST BE A THIEF, AFTER OUR MONEY!
YOU'RE BROKE AND YOU INTERRUPT OUR GAMBLING...
IS THAT TRUE !?


COME ON, DRAW YOUR SWORD!!
ANYONE SCARED OFF BY YOUR PATHETIC THREATS WILL NEVER MAKE IT HERE IN OSAKA!
C'MON, YOU PATHETIC BASTARD!!
I'LL C-CUT YOU DOWN!!
I'LL--
HA HA HA! AND YOU HAVE TO ANNOUNCE IT TO EVERYONE.
HEY!
HE'S GOING TO DRAW HIS SWORD!!
GO AHEAD AN' DO IT!!

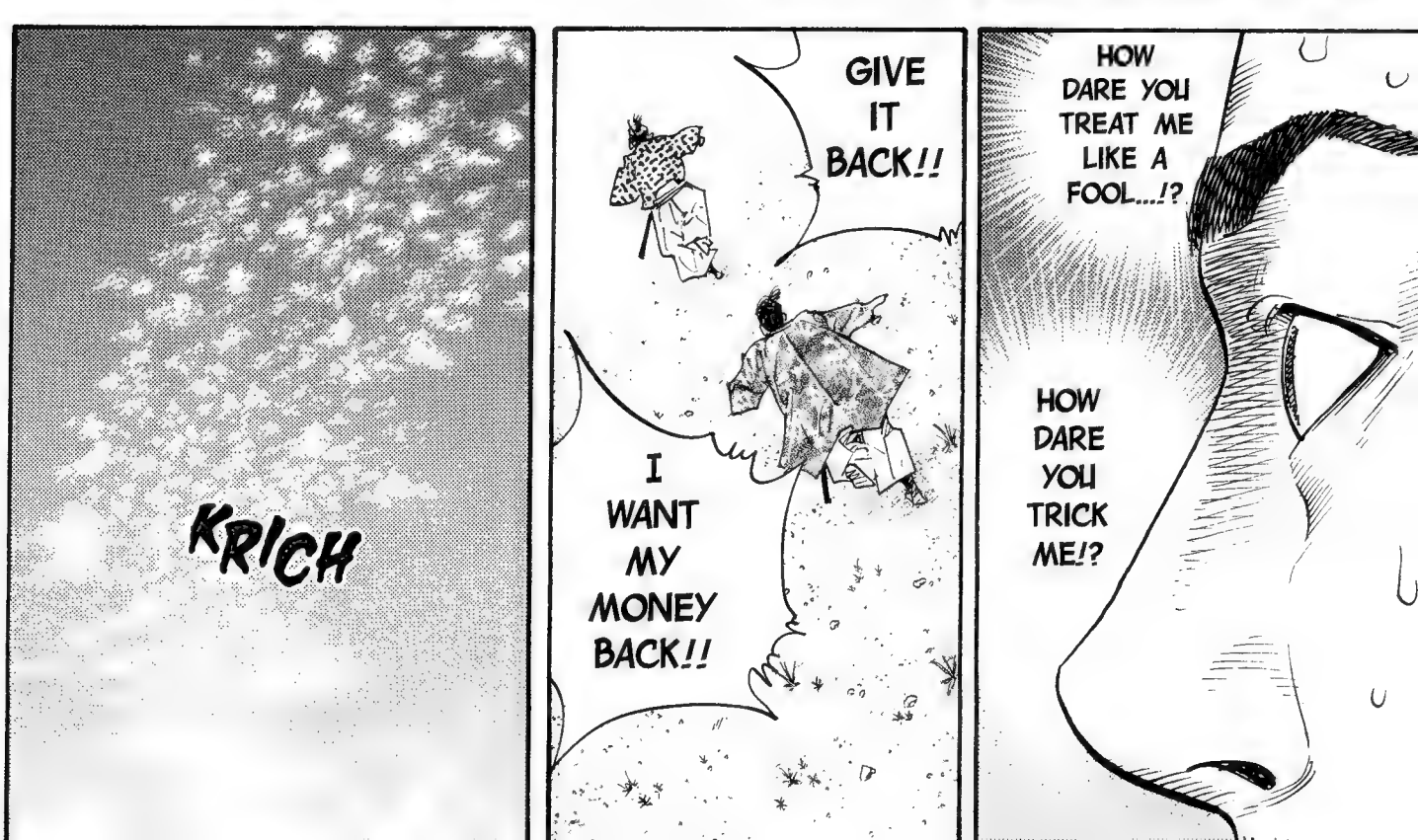

WHO DO YOU THINK I AM!?
YOU... VERMIN!!


KRICH
...OF THE CHŪJŌ STYLE!!
I'M SASAKI KOJIRŌ...

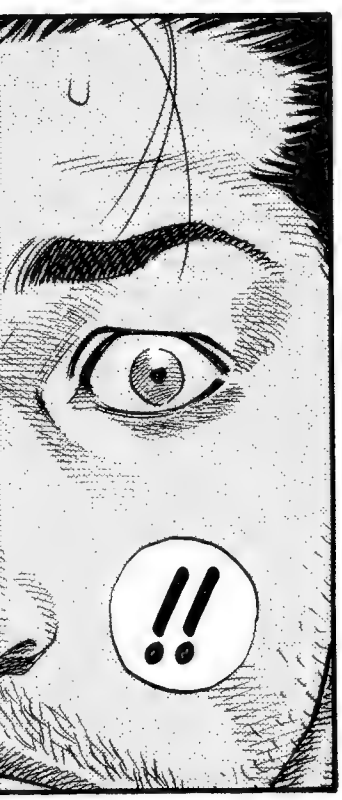

SLISH
...!!
GASP!
ARRGH!
HE CUT ME!!
HEY!
YASOMA!

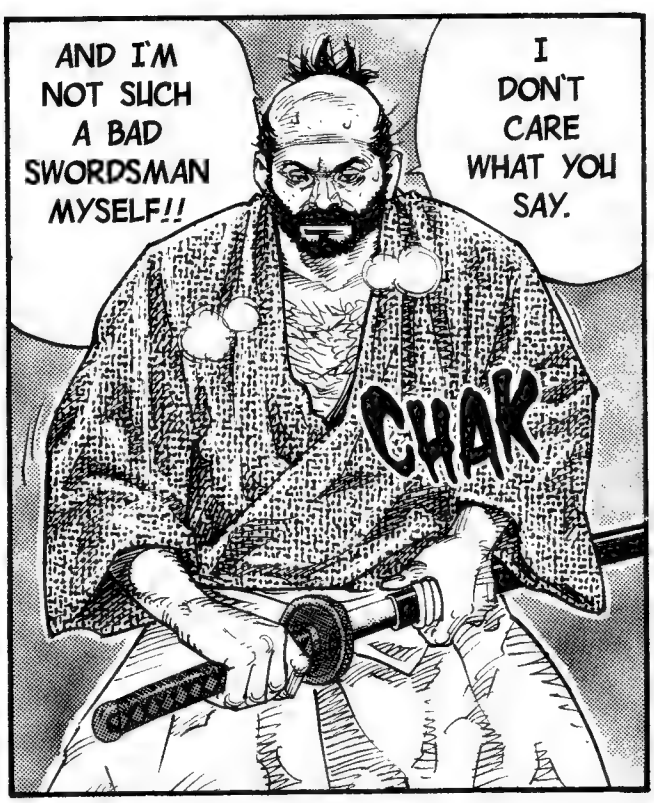

FWISH
FWISH
WAIT!


YOU TRICKED ME!!
YOU BASTARD...!!
WAIT!


KRICH
GIVE IT BACK!!
I WANT MY MONEY BACK!!
HOW DARE YOU TREAT ME LIKE A FOOL...!?
HOW DARE YOU TRICK ME!?


ALL RIGHT THEN...
I'M GETTING TIRED OF RUNNING.
HAH...
HUF
HUF
HUF


!!


AND I'M NOT SUCH A BAD SWORDSMAN MYSELF!!
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAY.
CHAK


GIVE ME BACK MY MONEY!!
HMPH!
YOU WERE STUPID ENOUGH TO GIVE IT TO ME.
WHAT !?


SMIRK
BESIDES...


FSH


IF I DEFEAT THE *MIGHTY* SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!
I'LL MAKE QUITE A NAME FOR MYSELF...


NOBODY WOULD KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.
YES, THAT'S WHAT I'LL DO!!
I CAN JUST CALL MYSELF SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!
NO, WAIT... IF I KILL YOU...


FIRST YOU CHEAT ME, AND NOW YOU SAY YOU'LL KILL ME!?
Y-YOU BASTARD!!


SMIRK

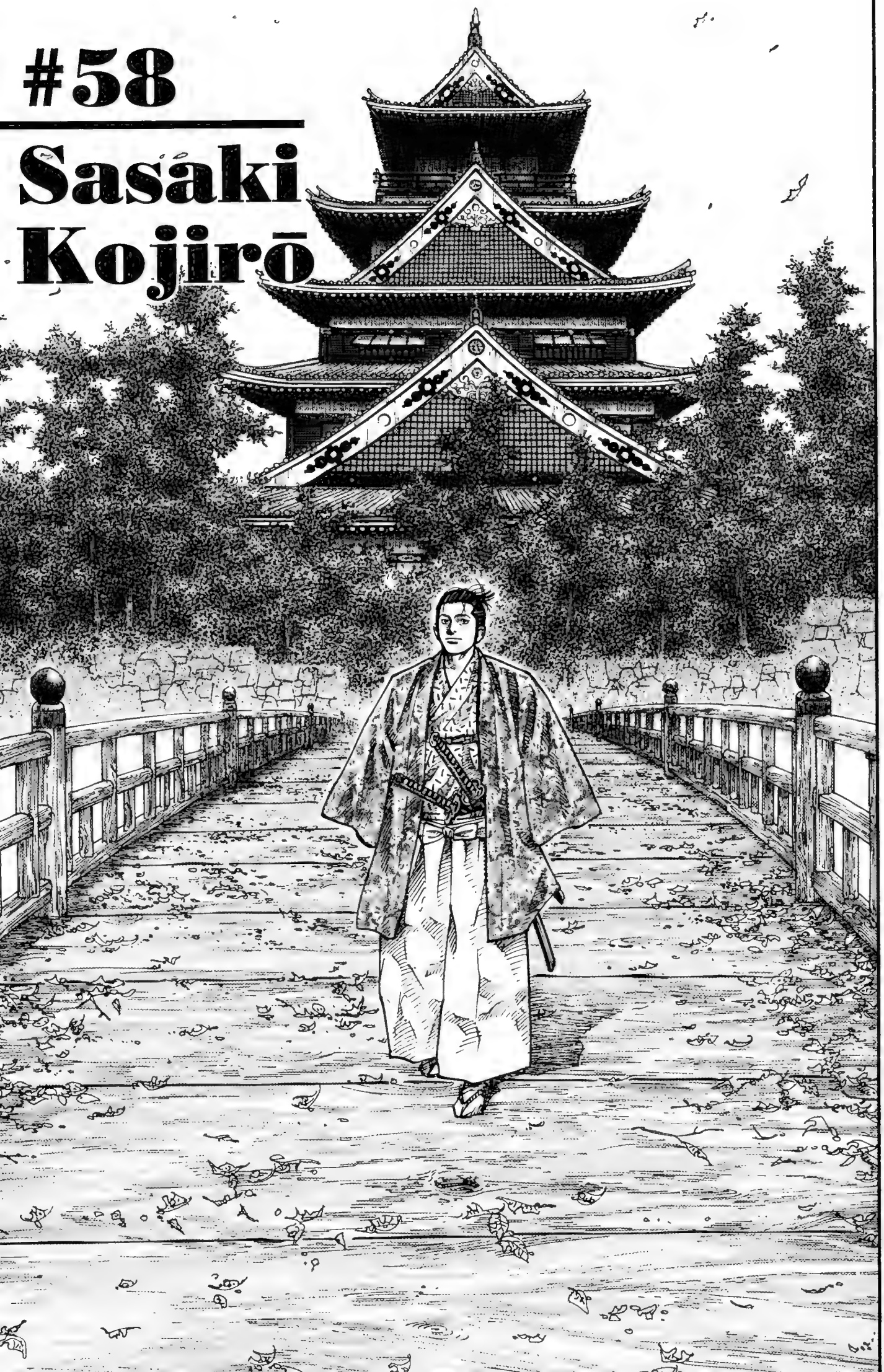

...
FROM HERE ON...
THAT'S RIDICULOUS!! YOU BASTARD!!
AND YOU SAY YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE MY NAME!?
DAMN YOU!!
...
KOJIRŌ...
...OUR SWORDS WILL DO THE TALKING.
KRICH
KOJIRŌ!
...!!


ARE YOU *REALLY* SASAKI KOJIRŌ?
SHAKE
!!
....
BRR
BRR


BRR
SHAKE
BRR

#58

Sasaki Kojirō




WAH HA HA!!
HA HA HA! YOU'RE TREMBLING WITH FEAR!!


MAYBE YOU'VE ALREADY BEATEN ME TO STEALING KOJIRŌ'S NAME!!
HMPH!


HA HA HA
YOU'RE JUST A MASTER OF BOASTING ABOUT YOURSELF!
SASAKI KOJIRŌ!


!?


WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?


...YOU'RE USING HIS NAME AND PASSING YOURSELF OFF AS HIM.
AFTER KILLING THE *REAL* SASAKI KOJIRŌ...
NO ONE WOULD EVER KNOW THE DIFFERENCE...


ARE YOU CALLING ME AN IMPOSTOR!?
H-HOW DARE YOU!?


SMIRK


HUF
HUF
HUF
...


AHHH!!
SWOOSH
YAHH!!
FWUMP


AFTER I KILL YOU, THAT IS.
...
I'LL BE THE *THIRD* SASAKI KOJIRŌ...
ALL RIGHT THEN...

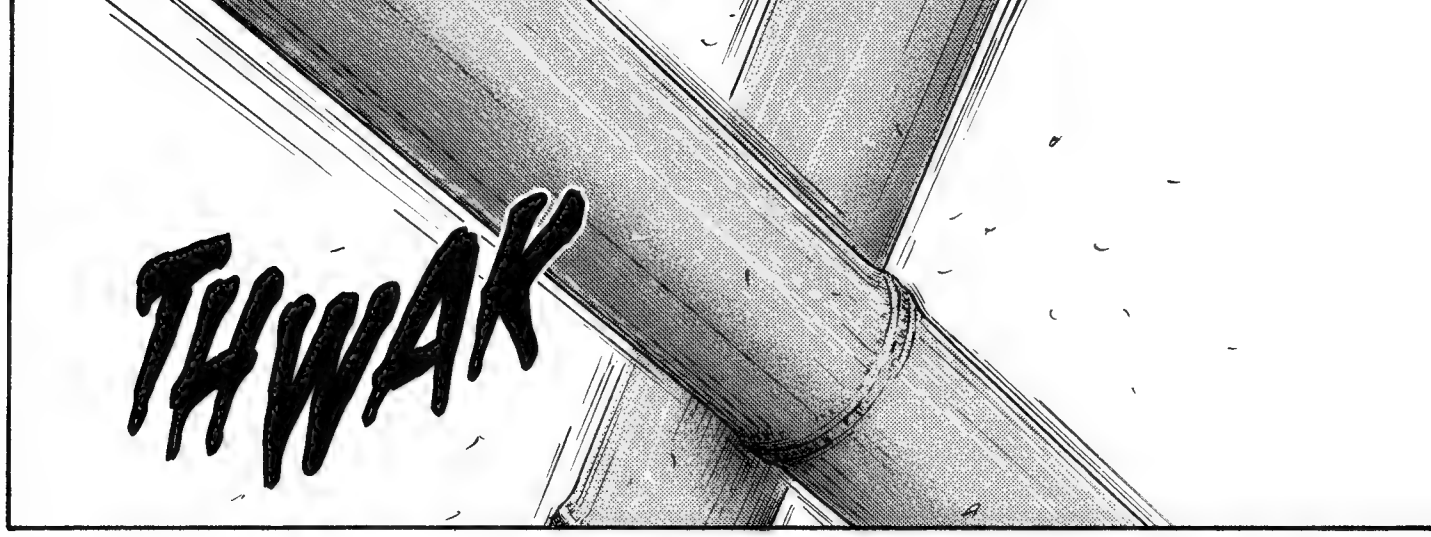

UNH!!
KRICH
IT'S *MY* TURN TO USE THE NAME!!

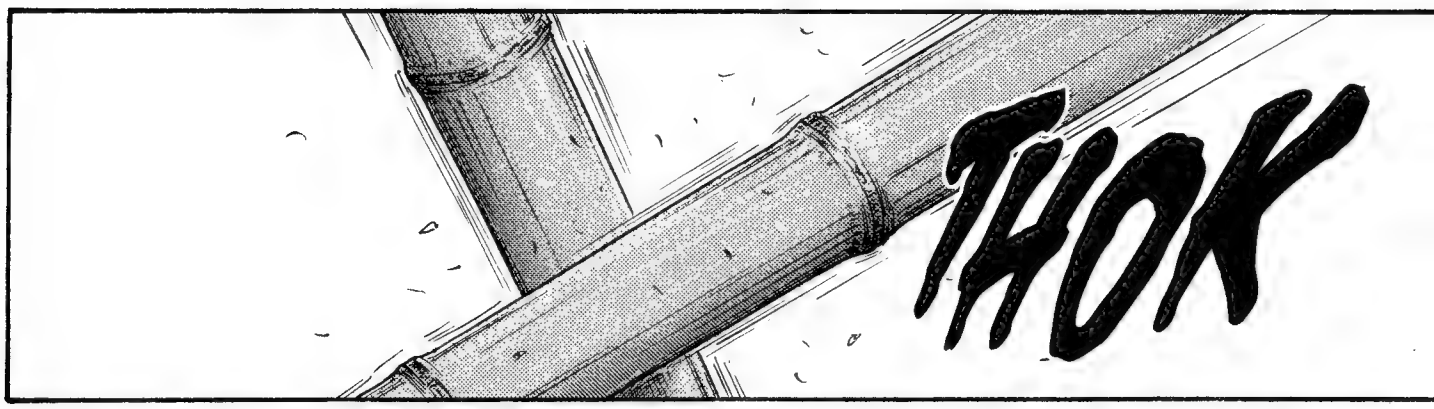

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF


I CAN'T DIE.
I HAVEN'T MADE ANYTHING OUT OF MY LIFE YET!!
I CAN'T LET THIS BASTARD KILL ME!!
I CAN'T...
THWAK


!
DAMN PIECE OF JUNK SWORD!!
!!
!!
YAHH!!
THUD
NGHH!
FWUSH


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
AT LEAST YOU HAVE SOME STRENGTH...
KRICH
HEH HEH...
BUT NOW, YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A SWORD.
WHUD
HUF
HUF
HUF
I CAN'T LOSE TO THIS BASTARD.
I JUST CAN'T...!!
HA HA HA!!
HA HA!


THWAK


THOK


THWAK


I'M FINALLY GOING TO BEAT YOU!!
FWOOSH


HUF
HA HA!
HUF
HUF

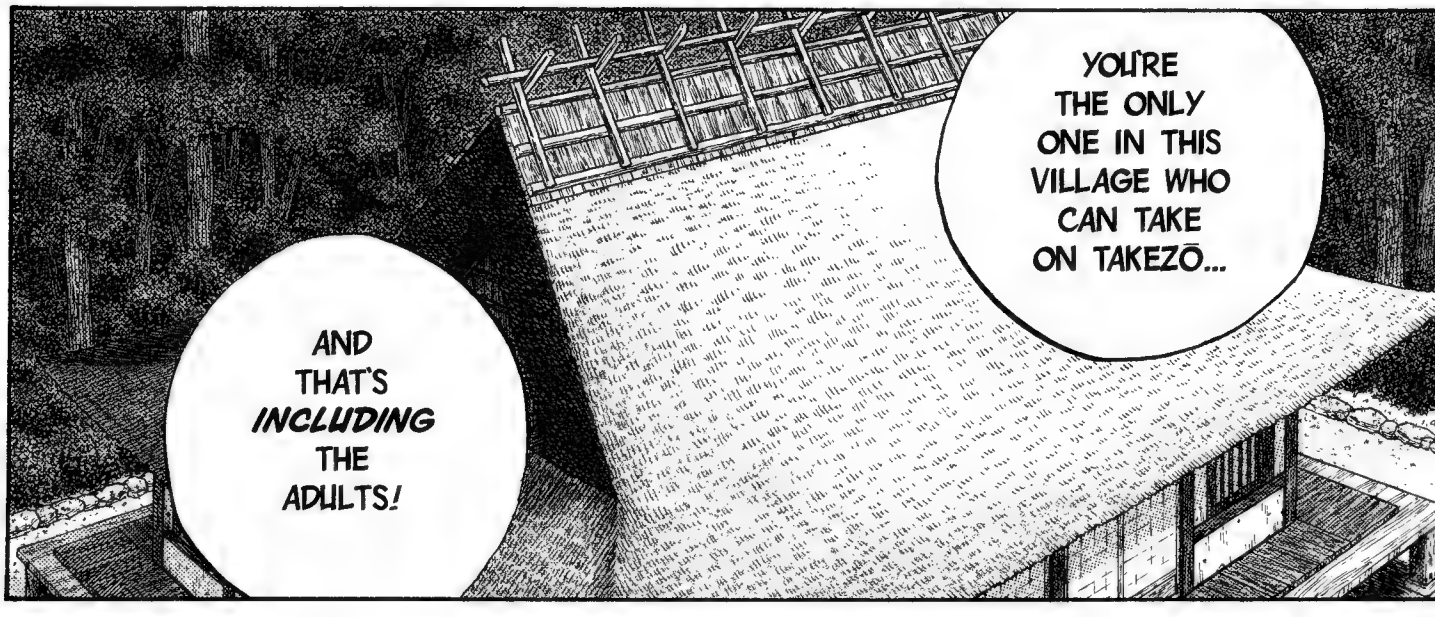

HUF
HUF


WHUD


THWUD
NNGH!
THWAK
!!
DAMN!!
GASP!
...!!
I USED THAT TREE ON PURPOSE.
COULDN'T YOU EVEN FIGURE THAT OUT?
YOU IDIOT.
IF THAT TREE WASN'T THERE, I WOULD HAVE WON.

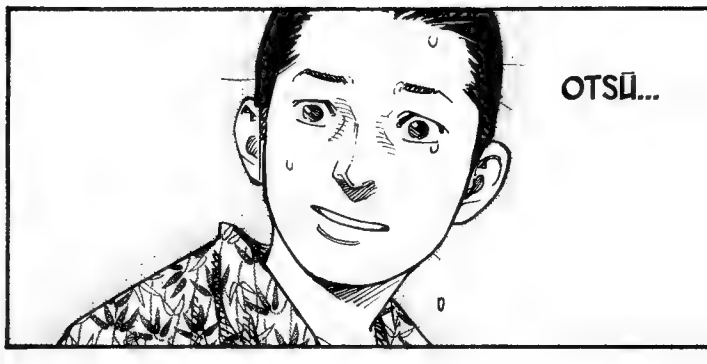

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL BAD, MATAHACHI.
YOU'RE STRONG, TOO.


TAKEZŌ...
...THAT WASN'T NICE!
SLUMP
HUH?

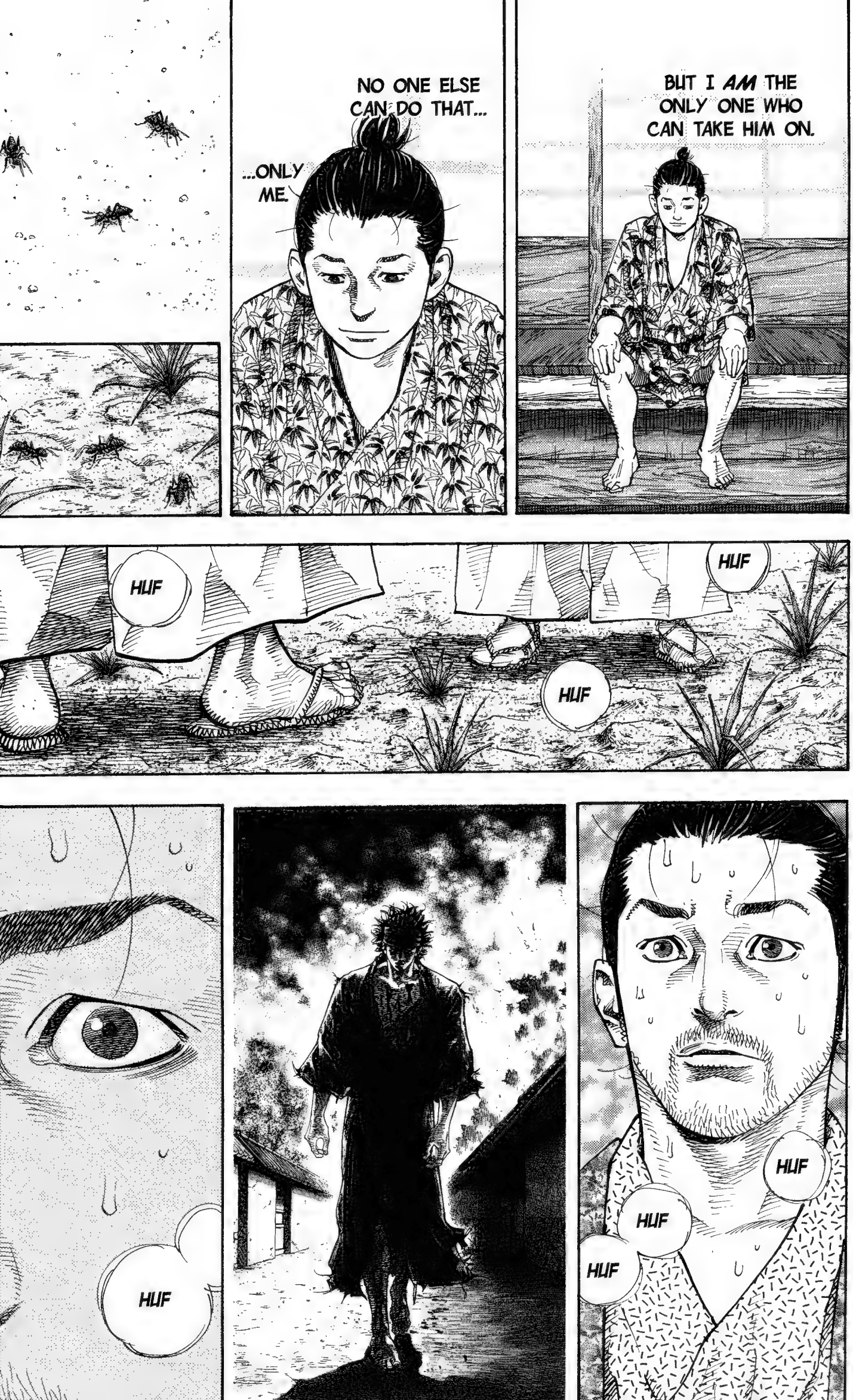

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE IN THIS VILLAGE WHO CAN TAKE ON TAKEZŌ...
AND THAT'S *INCLUDING* THE ADULTS!


SOMETHING I KNOW I DON'T HAVE...


ONCE HE GETS HIS HAND ON A SWORD, HE BECOMES DIFFERENT. HE HAS SOMETHING UNIQUE.


OTSŪ...


I'M NOT AB-NORMAL.
HMPH.
UH-HUH.
THAT'S RIGHT, I'M *NOT* WEAK, AM I!?
HE'S JUST ABNORMAL.


NO ONE ELSE CAN DO THAT...
...ONLY ME.
BUT I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TAKE HIM ON.
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

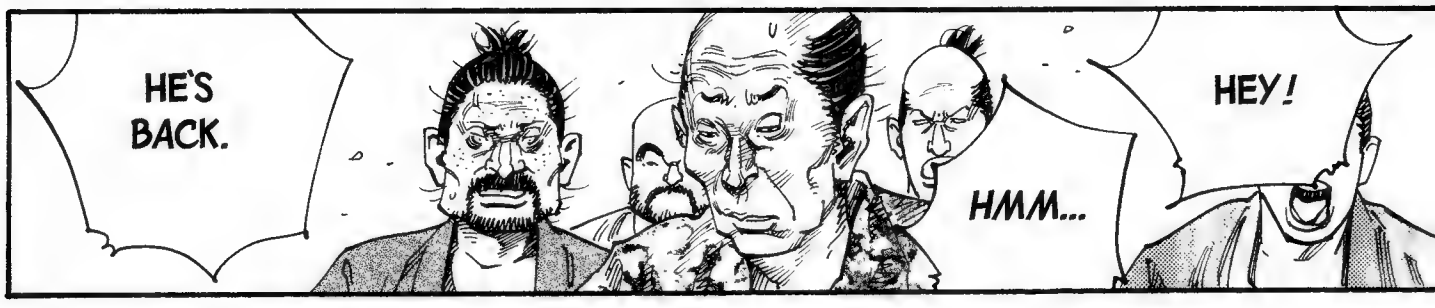

TAKEZŌ...


HM?
HMPH
SOMEHOW, THIS VERMIN DOESN'T SEEM AS IMPOSING ANYMORE...


SHUNK


SLISSH
I AM SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!
THUD



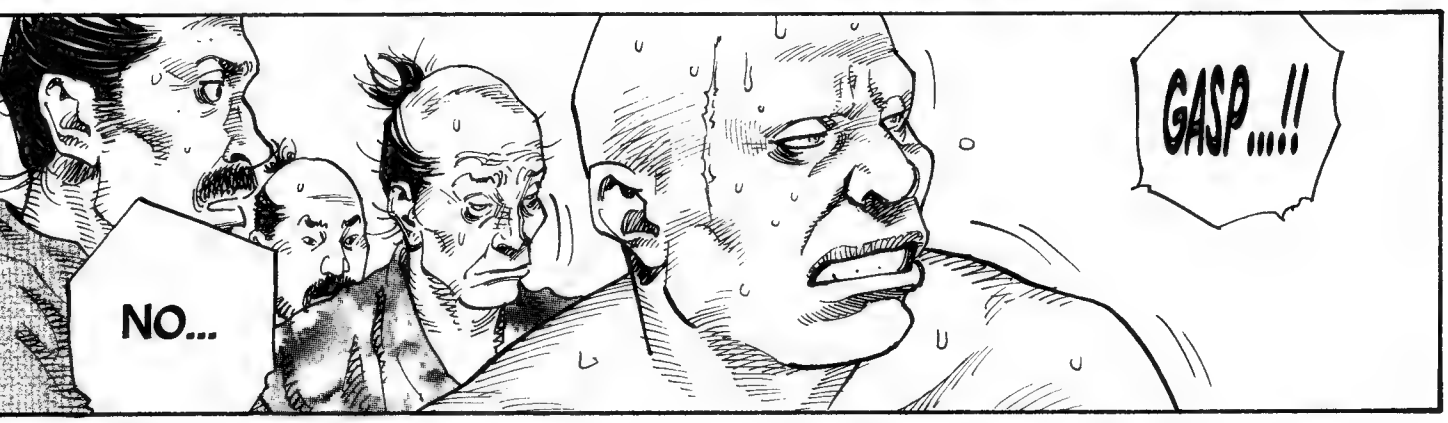

HE'S BACK.
HMM...
HEY!


FSH

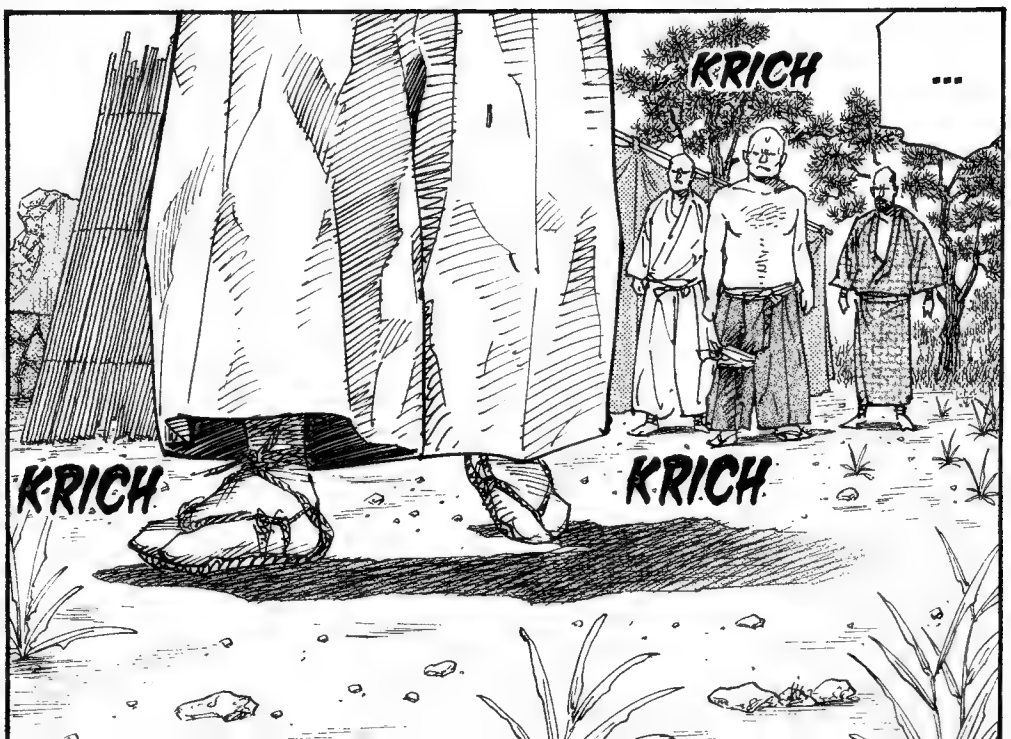

THAT'S...
THAT'S AKAKABE'S SWORD...!!

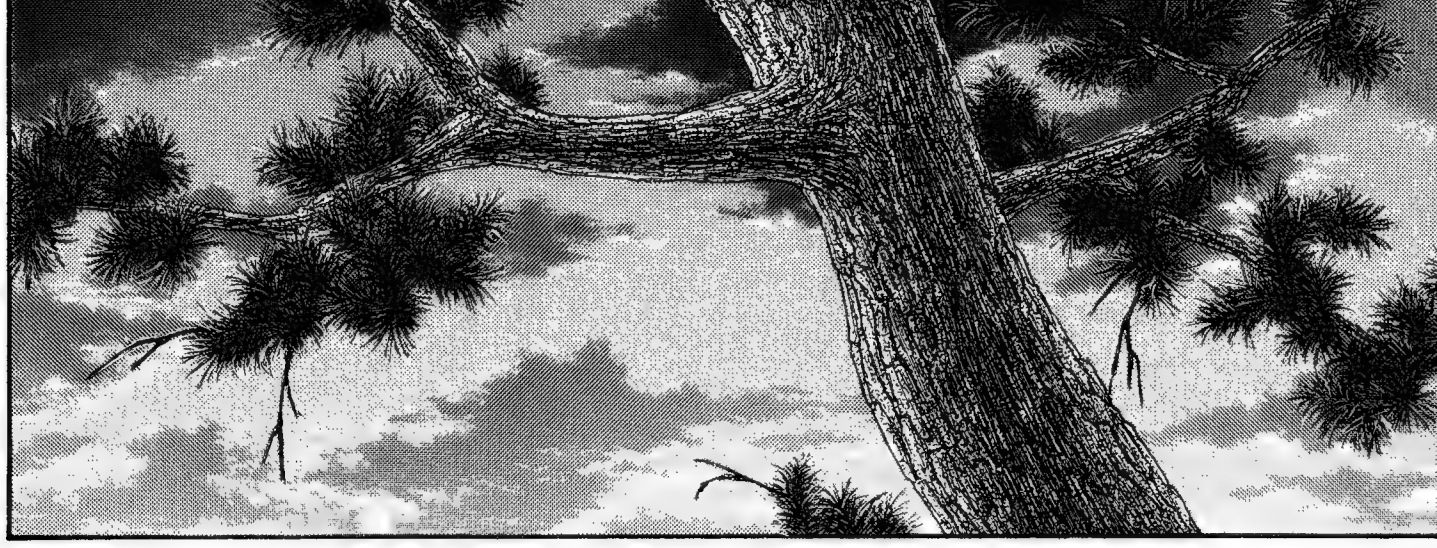

KRICH
HE'S ALONE...
KRICH
WHERE'S AKAKABE!?


...BY SASAKI KOJIRŌ?
ANYONE ELSE WANT TO BE CUT DOWN...


NO...
GASP...!!




KRICH
KRICH
KRICH
...



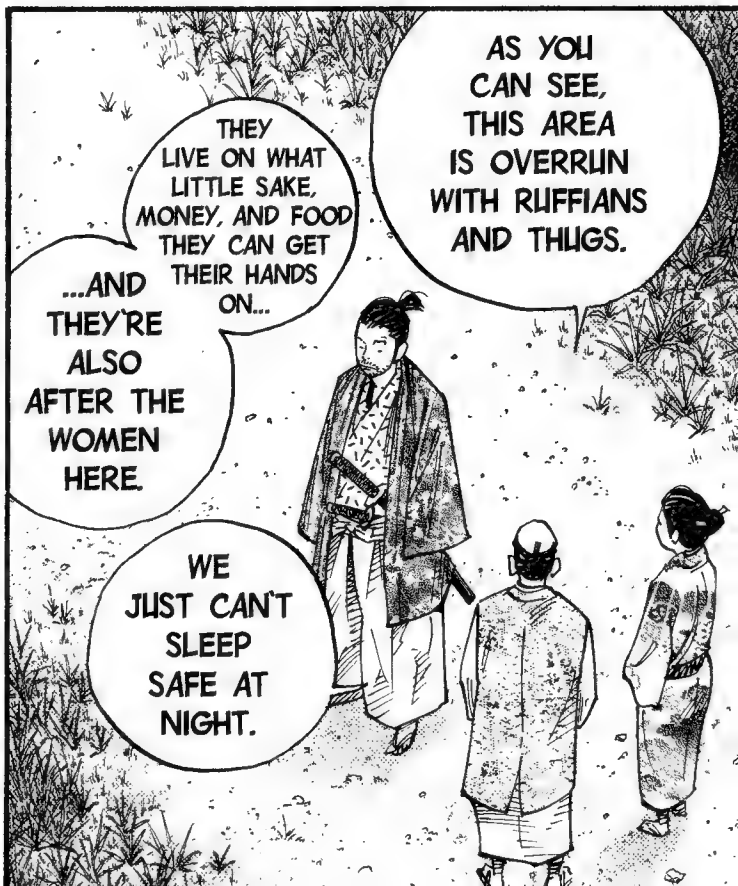

YOU CAN STAY AT OUR PLACE...
DO YOU HAVE A PLACE TO STAY TONIGHT?
WHAT ?


WELL...


HUH?


EXCUSE ME...
SIR!!

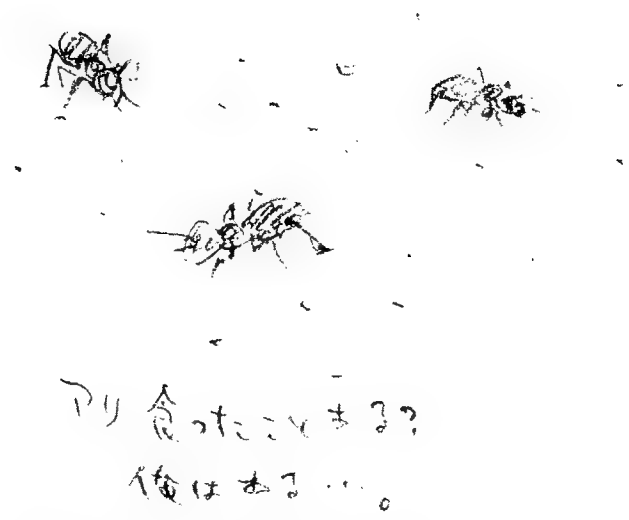

BUT IF WE HAVE A SAMURAI LIKE YOU STAYING AT OUR PLACE, THEN THEY WON'T COME NEAR US.
OF COURSE, WE WON'T CHARGE YOU.
WOULD YOU DO US THE HONOR...?


AS YOU CAN SEE, THIS AREA IS OVERRUN WITH RUFFIANS AND THUGS.
THEY LIVE ON WHAT LITTLE SAKE, MONEY, AND FOOD THEY CAN GET THEIR HANDS ON...
...AND THEY'RE ALSO AFTER THE WOMEN HERE.
WE JUST CAN'T SLEEP SAFE AT NIGHT.

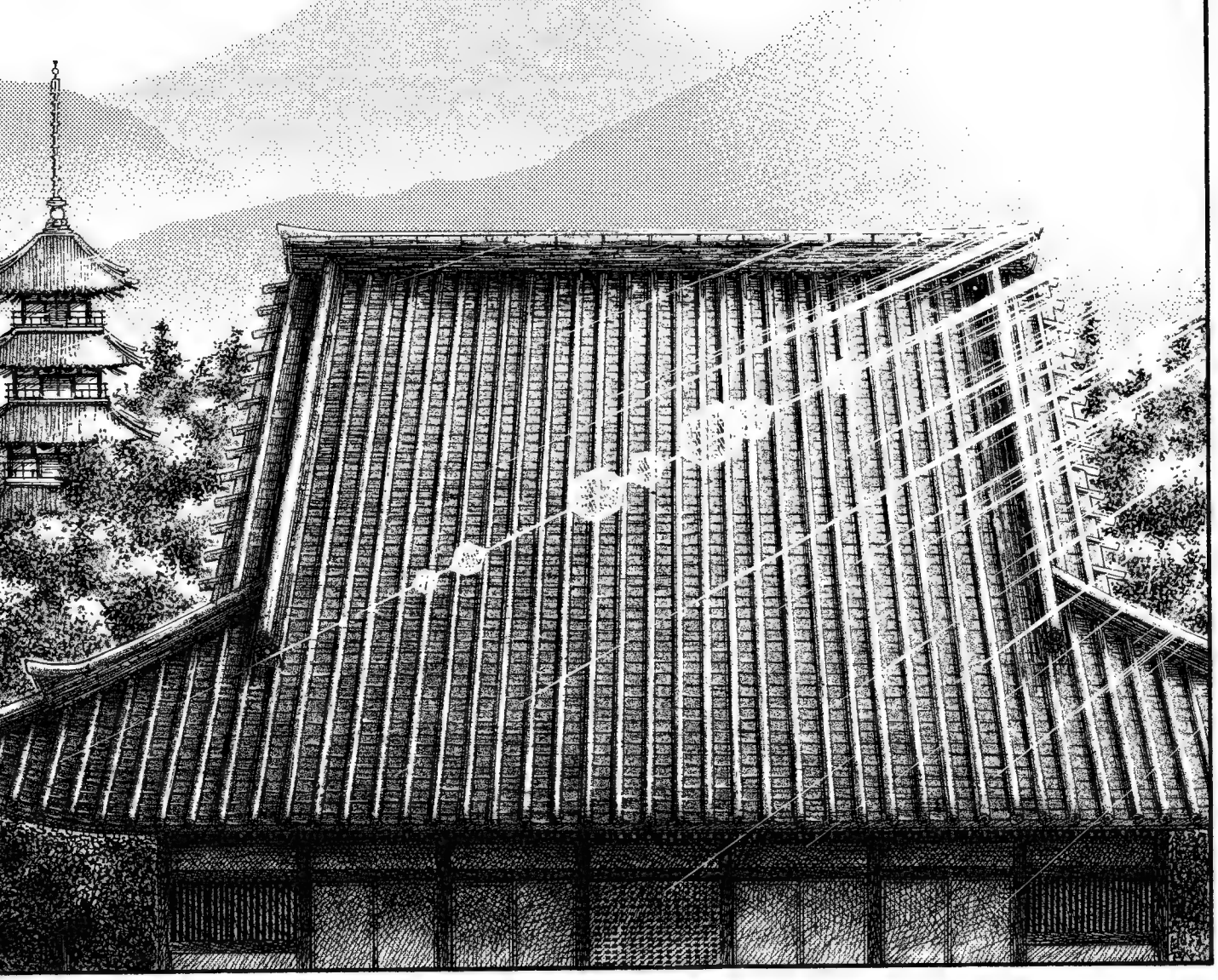

...!!
SURE, IF YOU THINK I CAN BE OF ANY HELP...
...

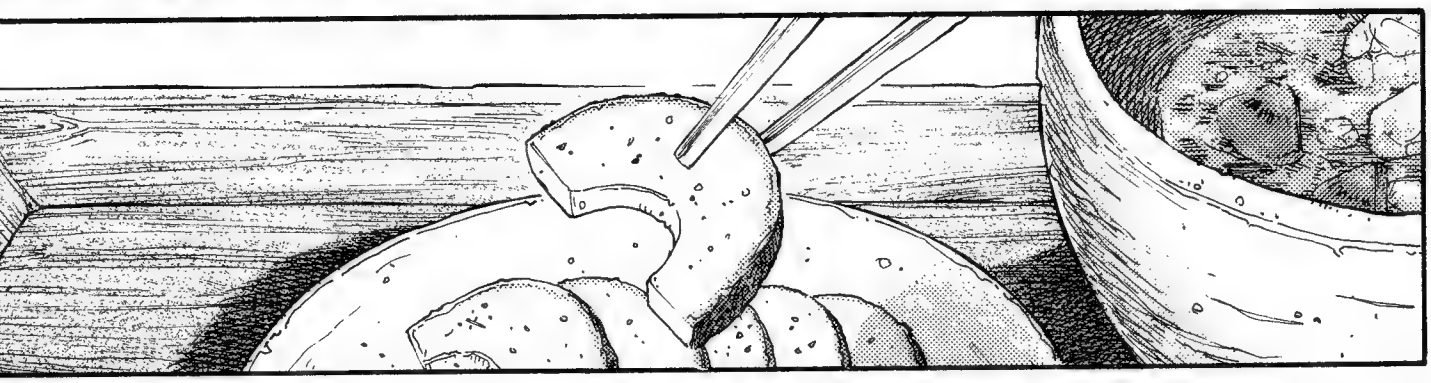
AHH...
OH, KOJIRŌ...

Vagabond



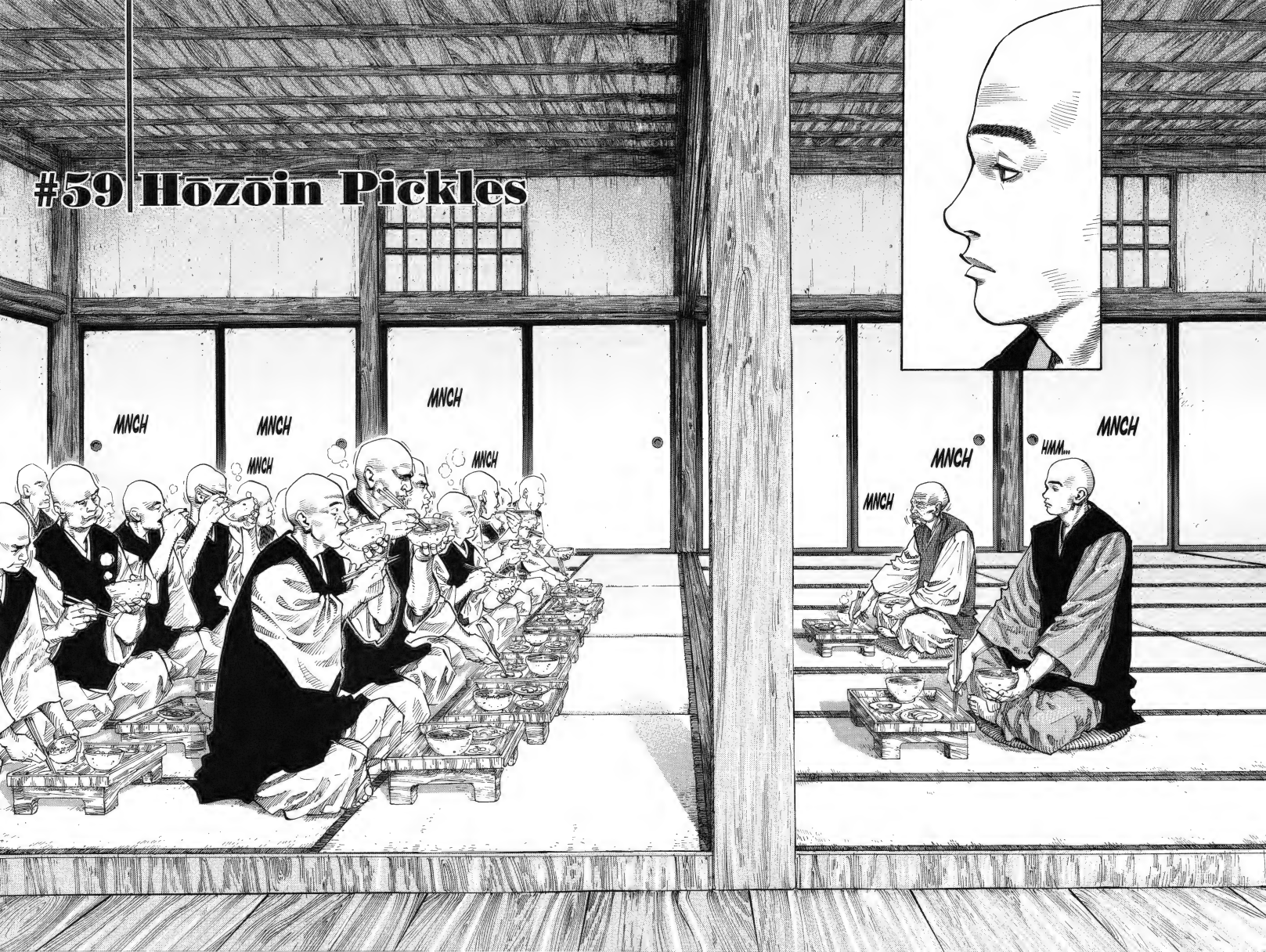
(HAVE YOU EVER EATEN ANTS? I HAVE...)

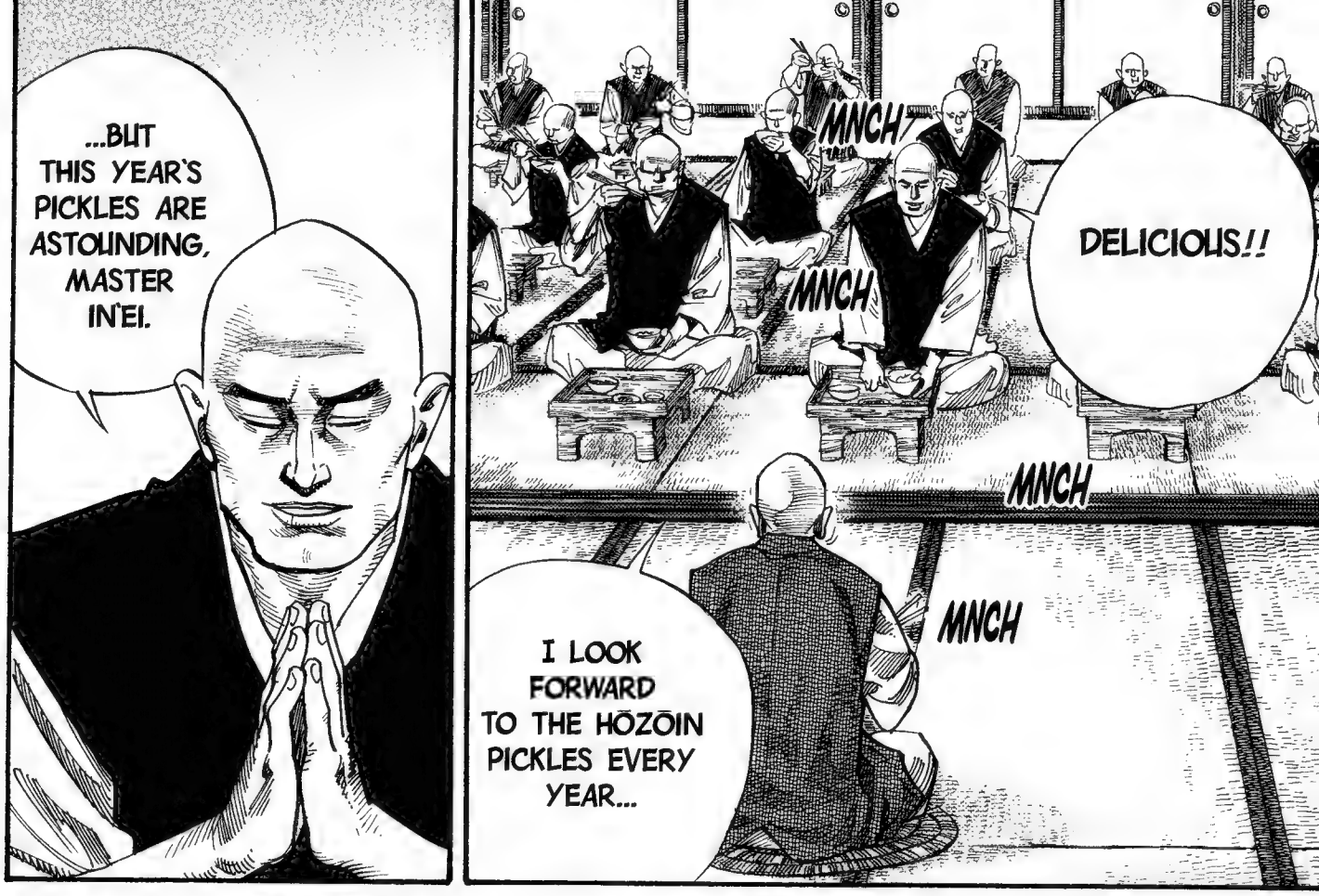




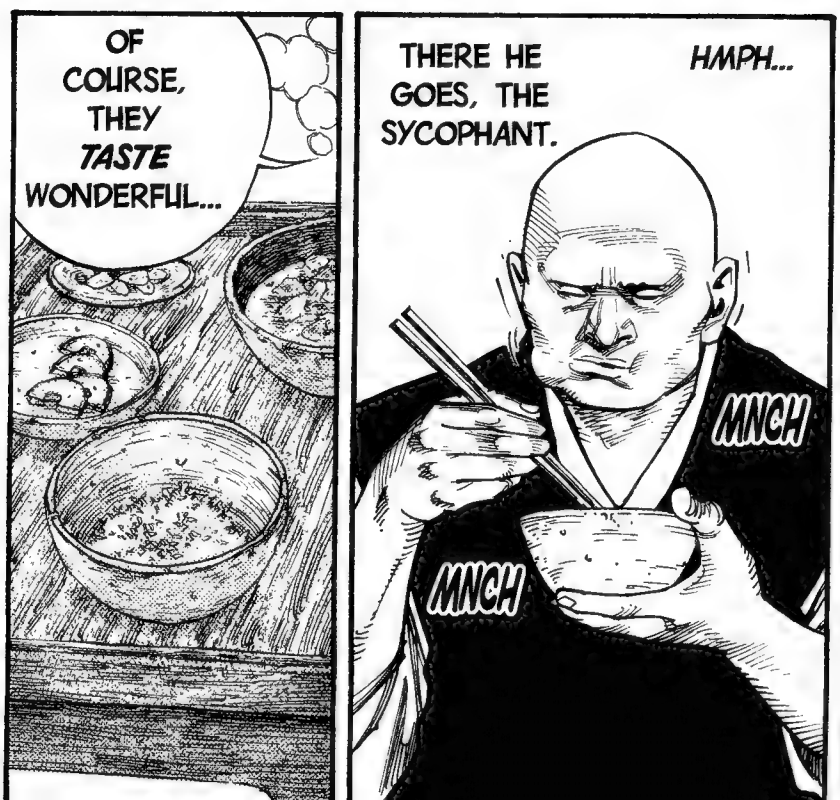

MNCH

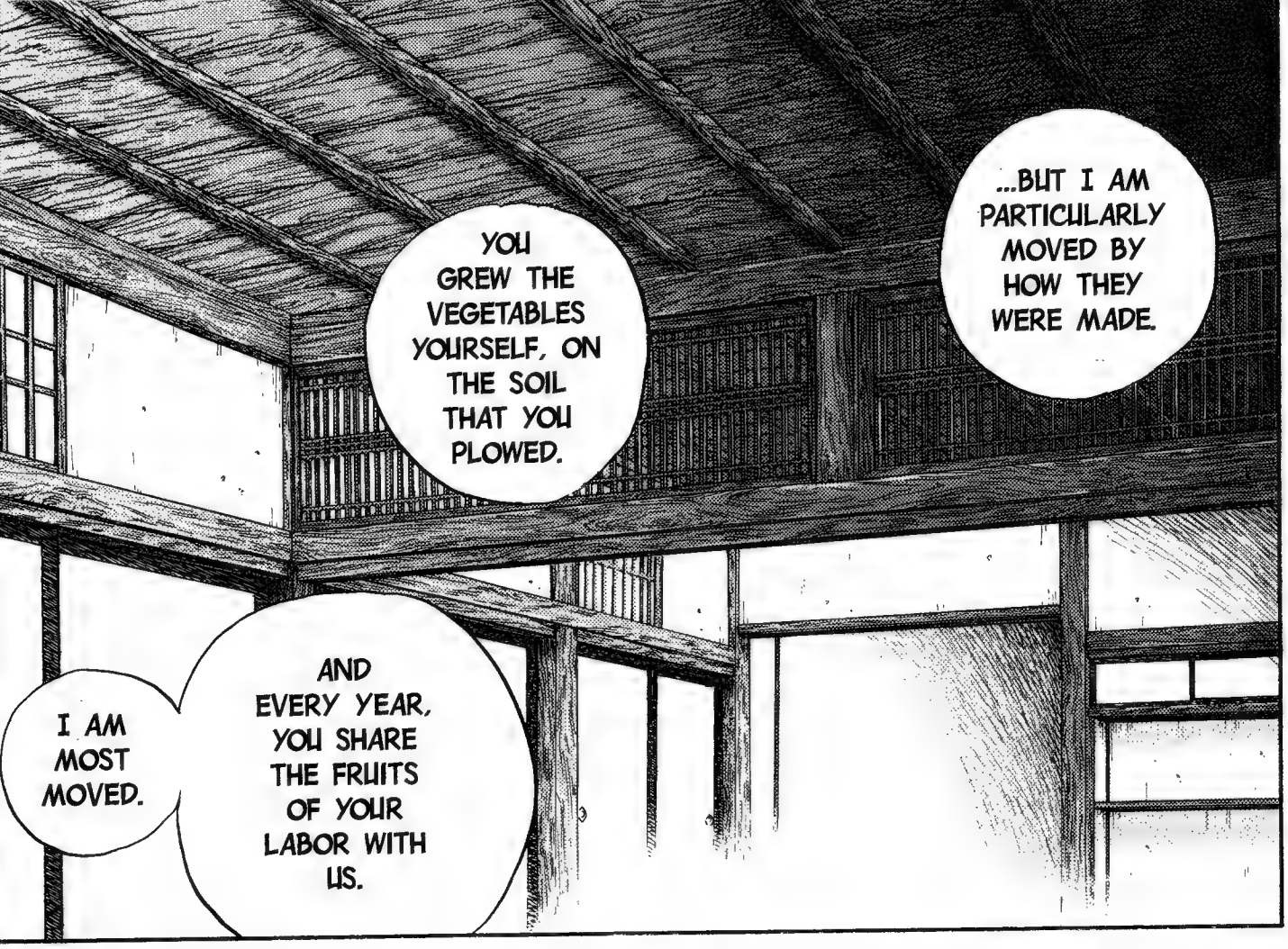
#59 Hōzōin Pickles




...BUT THIS YEAR'S PICKLES ARE ASTOUNDING, MASTER IN'EI.
MNCH
MNCH
MNCH
MNCH
DELICIOUS!!
I LOOK FORWARD TO THE HŌZŌIN PICKLES EVERY YEAR...


MNCH
MNCH
HMM...

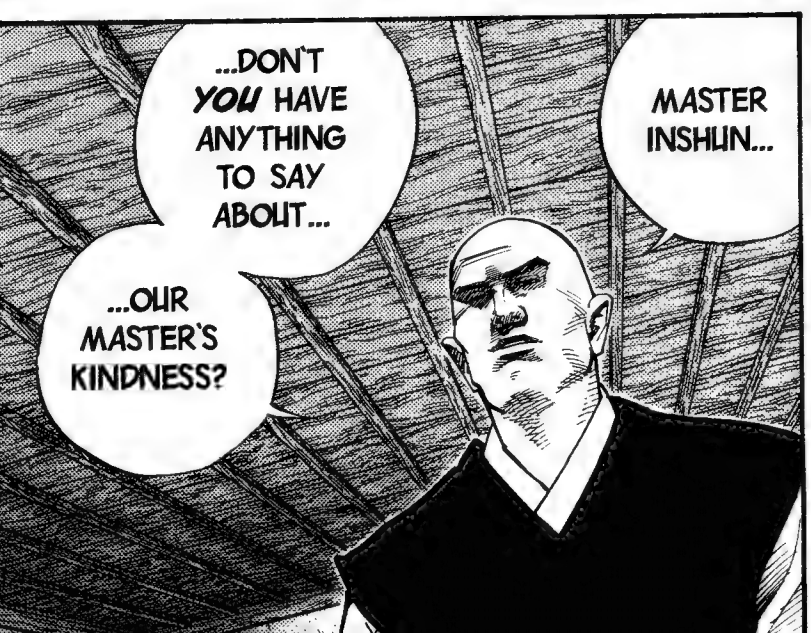

OF COURSE, THEY *TASTE* WONDERFUL...
THERE HE GOES, THE SYCOPHANT.
HMPH...
MNCH
MNCH
WE PICKLE THEM THE WAY YOU TAUGHT US...
...BUT THEY NEVER TURN OUT LIKE YOURS!!
ONLY YOU CAN MAKE PICKLES LIKE THIS!


...BUT I AM PARTICULARLY MOVED BY HOW THEY WERE MADE.
YOU GREW THE VEGETABLES YOURSELF, ON THE SOIL THAT YOU PLOWED.
AND EVERY YEAR, YOU SHARE THE FRUITS OF YOUR LABOR WITH US.
I AM MOST MOVED.

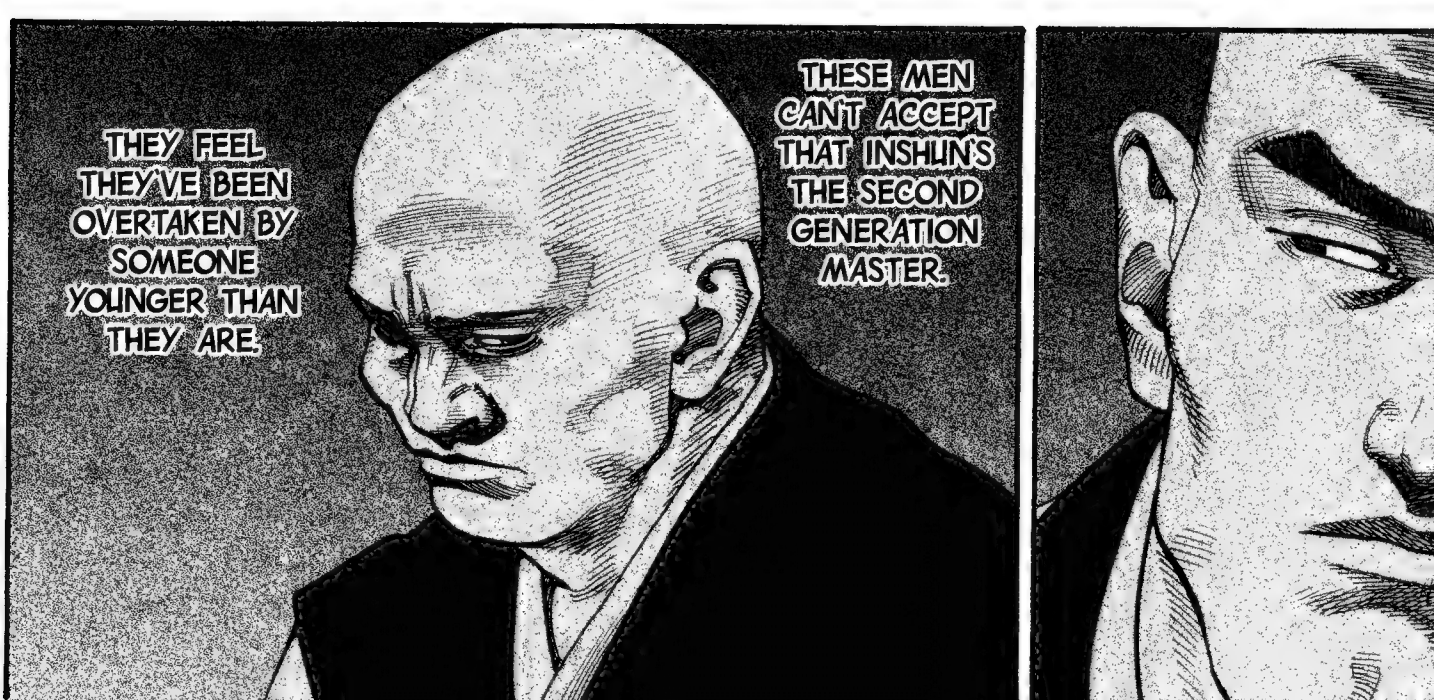

YOUR BLATANT FLATTERY IS SO TRANSPARENT...
MNCH
MNCH


YES.
SNIF
SNIF


I, YOUR MOST FAITHFUL DISCIPLE, MYŌEI, AND EVERYONE ELSE HERE, ALL FEEL THE SAME WAY.
SNIFFLE
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

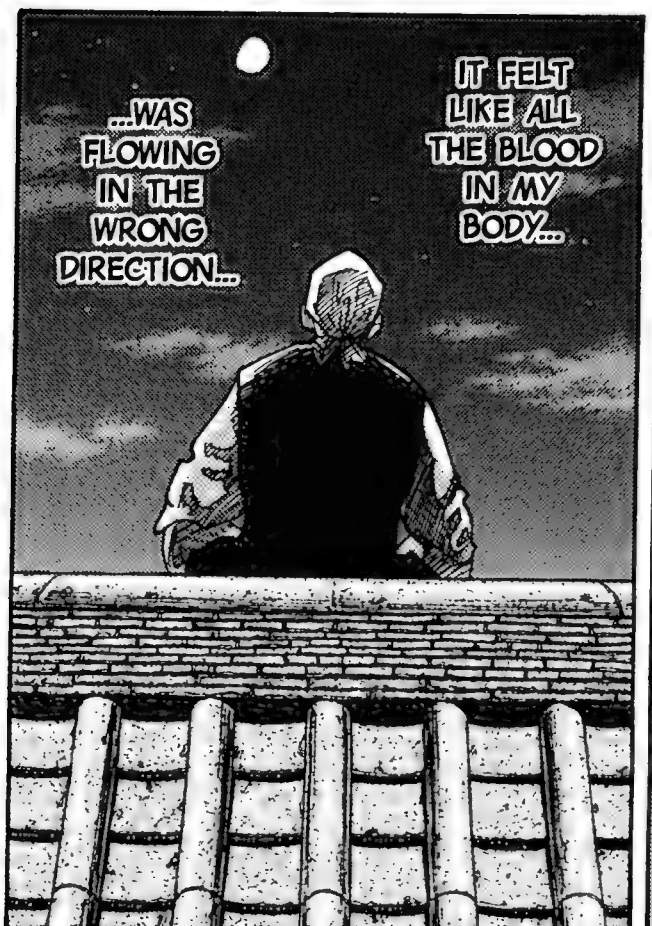

MASTER INSHUN...
...DON'T *YOU* HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT...
...OUR MASTER'S KINDNESS?


WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU?
MASTER INSHUN ...
YOU'VE BEEN IN A DAZE EVER SINCE YOUR FIGHT WITH THAT MIYAMOTO FELLOW.
HMPH!
...TOO SALTY.
MNCH
!!
MNCH
...PERHAPS YOU DON'T DESERVE TO BE THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN...
IF THAT WAS ENOUGH TO WEAR YOU OUT...
...YOU'RE OVER-STEPPING YOUR PLACE.
MYŌEI...


THEY FEEL THEY'VE BEEN OVERTAKEN BY SOMEONE YOUNGER THAN THEY ARE.
THESE MEN CAN'T ACCEPT THAT INSHUN'S THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER.

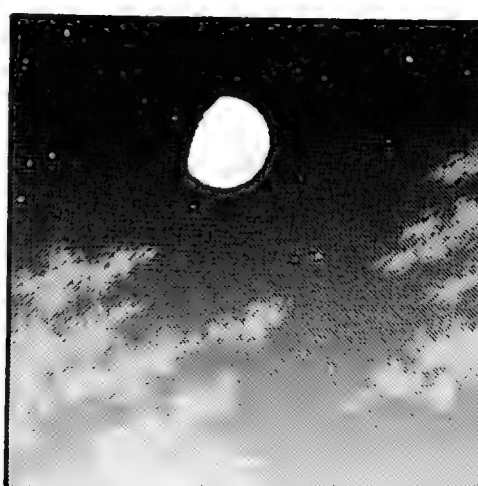

DID IT REALLY WEAR YOU OUT THIS MUCH?
HMM...
MNCH MNCH
IT WAS A HARD AND BITTER BATTLE...
...BUT YOU WON.
THAT FIGHT WITH MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
...




...WAS FLOWING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION...
IT FELT LIKE ALL THE BLOOD IN MY BODY...








FWOOSH
I'M NOT GONNA LOSE.
YAHH!!
FWAK
!!


HMM...
...I'M SO BORED.

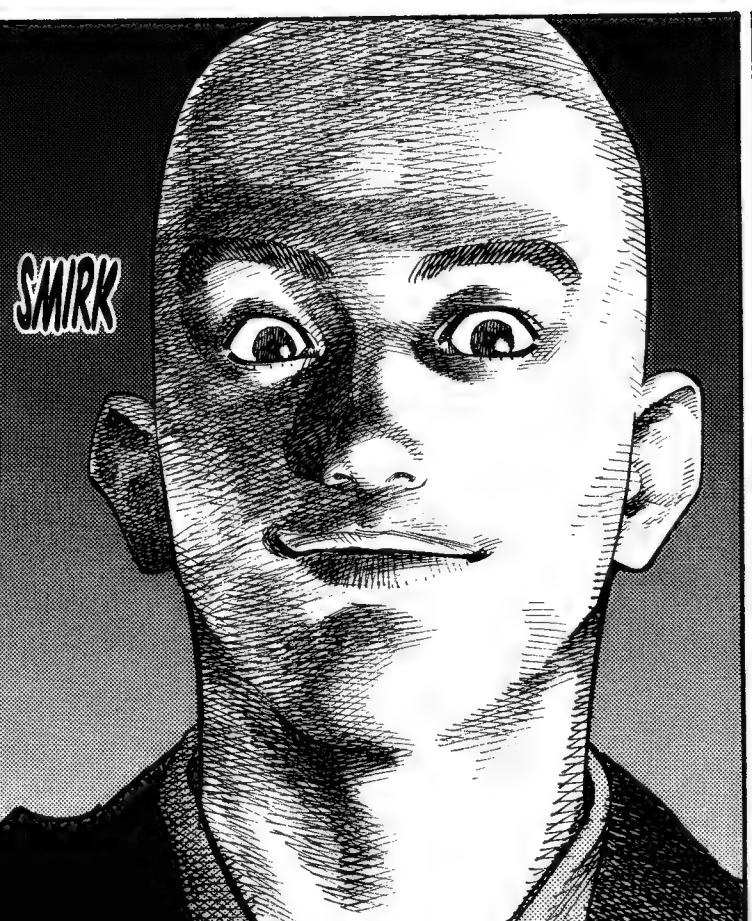

INSHUN IS FINISHED.
THAT'S HOW INSHUN IS NOW.
HE'LL NEVER REGAIN HIS SPIRIT.
I'VE SEEN MANY FIGHTERS LOSE THEIR SPIRIT...
...AFTER A CRITICAL FIGHT OR BATTLE...
THEYRE JUST COMPLETELY SPENT.
THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN THE FIRST PLACE...
SO INSHUN'S DONE.
I THOUGHT HE MIGHT AT LEAST ACT MORE ALERT IN FRONT OF MASTER IN'EI...
HA HA HA!
HMM...
MYŌEI, YOU'LL BE THE NEXT MASTER OF HŌZŌIN!


I THOUGHT HE RAN BACK TO HIS HOME VILLAGE...
BUT DID YOU HEAR WHAT HAPPENED TO MIYAMOTO MUSASHI?
HUH?
SUPPOSEDLY, HE'S IN THE MOUNTAINS OF KASUGA.
WHAT!? THAT'S RIGHT HERE.


WHAT!?
AND HE'S RIGOROUSLY TRAINING TO DEFEAT INSHUN.
AND...


...MASTER IN'EI IS THE ONE WHO'S TRAINING HIM.

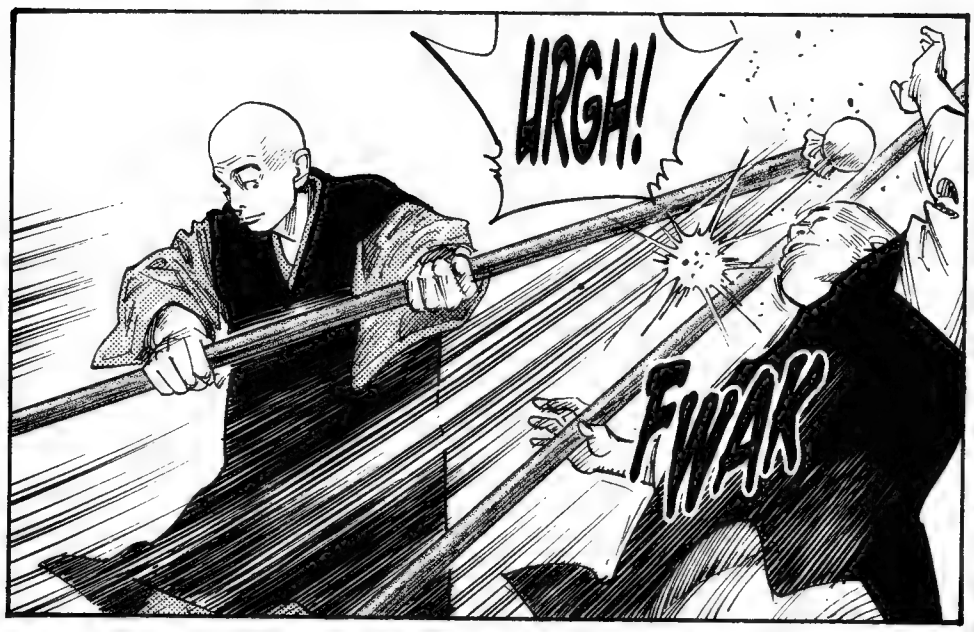

IS THAT TRUE?


SMIRK


!!


FWIP
!!


THUNK
!!
NNGH!


URGH!
FWAK


HEY!
WHAT'RE YOU--!?
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND!?




HMM...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE MASTER'S UP TO...
YOU--
BASTARD!!
FWOOSH
HUYAAH!!
THUNK
NNGH!
...BUT MUSASHI STILL WANTS TO FIGHT ME!?

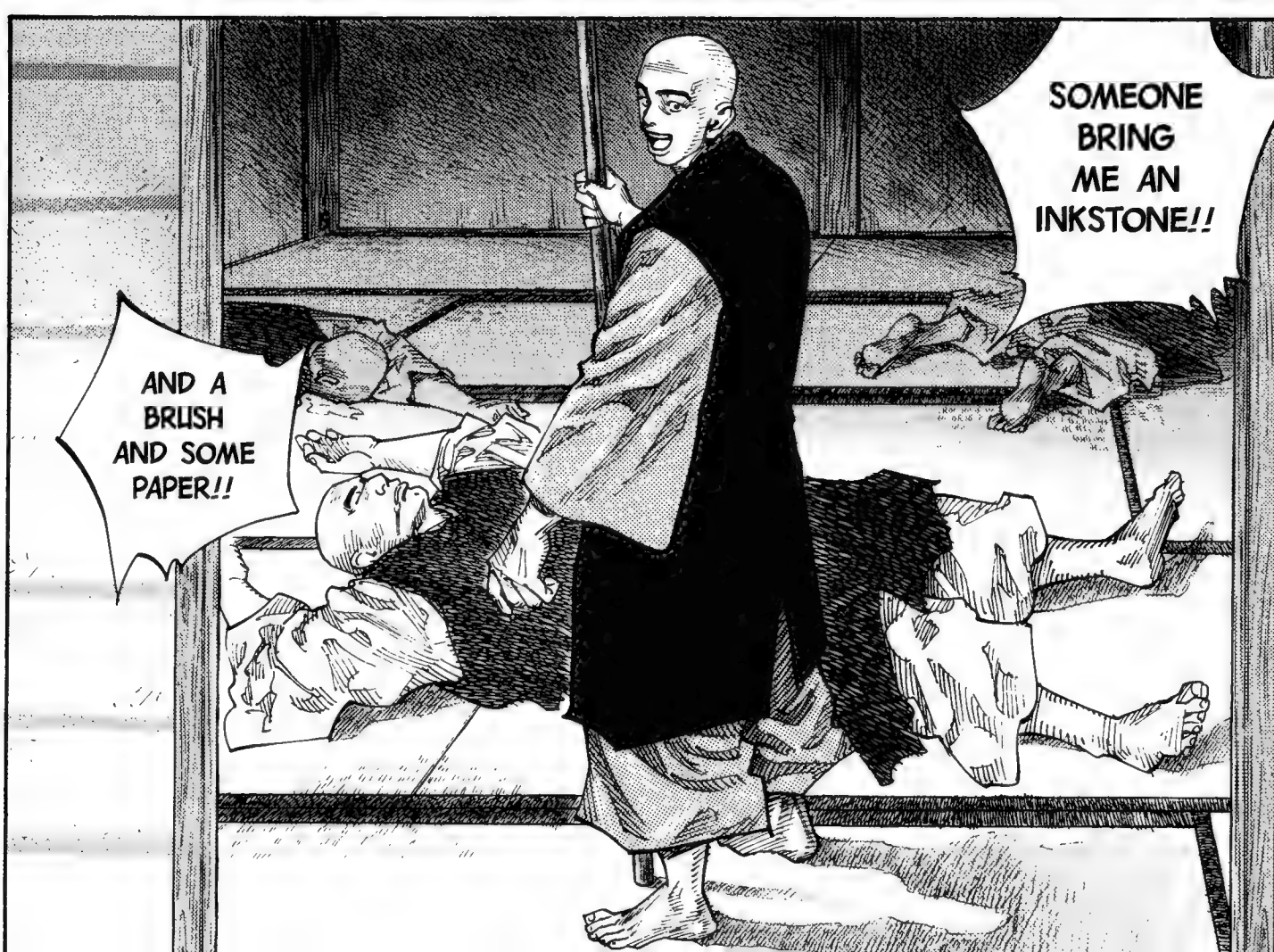

THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!!
THUNK

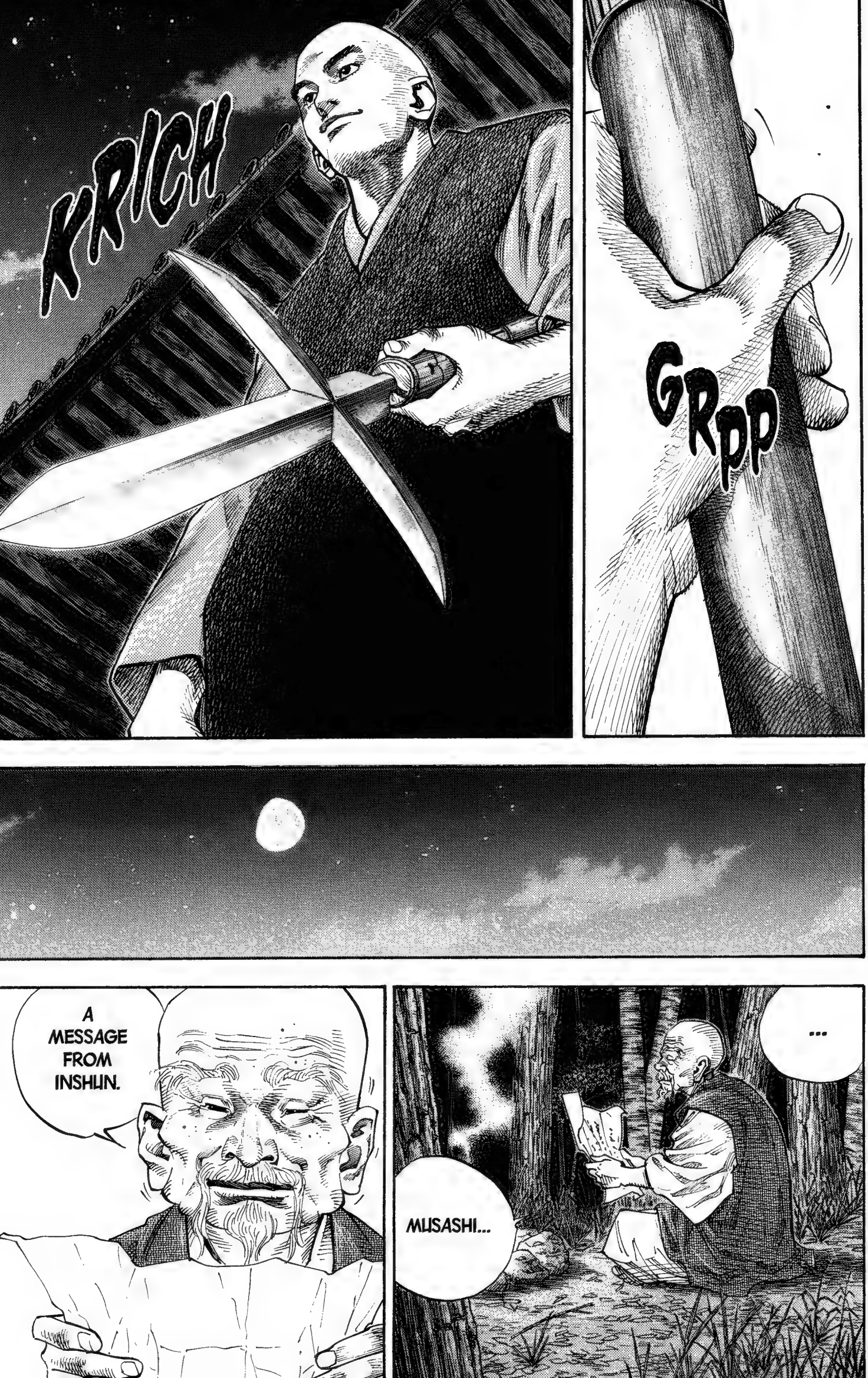

THUD
ARGH!


!!


YOU LITTLE BASTARD!!
FWOOSH
YAHH!!
KLAK
...
YOU'RE TOO SLOW.


THWAK
YAHH!!


SOMEONE BRING ME AN INKSTONE!!
AND A BRUSH AND SOME PAPER!!


KRICH
GRPP
A MESSAGE FROM INSHUN.
MUSASHI...
...


HE'S
COMING...





End of volume 6

SCANNED BY :

. DEMETTER

. SUPERJOE

EDITED BY :

. PHANTOM GREYFIRE

HOSTED ON :

COLORED MANGA.COM



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Glossary and Background Information

A note on names: The names presented within the context of this manga are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *Vagabond*, however, has been presented first name followed by last name. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last.

A Brief Historical Overview

The *Sengoku* (warring states) period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weak, and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyō* (domain lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the daimyō were constantly at war with each other. One daimyō in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, he managed to control approximately one-third of Japan by the time of his assassination in 1582. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating a federation amongst the daimyō, and by 1590 order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the daimyō from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major daimyō from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present-day Gifu Prefecture), where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years. The political stability that resulted put mass numbers of samurai out of work. Masterless samurai, known as *rōnin*, were forced to wander the land to seek out employment. This, the beginning of the Edo period (1600-1868), set the stage for many of the period dramas and *chambara* sword-fighting films that have popularized the image of the samurai to a Western audience.

Hōzōin Spear Technique

A spear technique typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force. It was created by the Buddhist monk Hōzōin Kakuzenbō In'ei of Hōzōin Temple in Nara. Hōzōin was a sub-temple of Kōfukuji Temple.

Itō Ittōsai
Founder of one of the largest schools of sword fighting, the ittō-ryū. Before establishing his own style, Ittōsai is said to have studied a variant of the chūjō-ryū style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

Koku
Approximately 5.1 U.S. bushels or 180.39 liters. Samurai were paid stipends in bushels of rice. One *koku* was used as a standard of measure to represent the amount of rice necessary to feed one man for one year.

Sasaki Kojirō
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi. Kojirō is believed to have studied the chūjō-ryū style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojirō was renowned for his *tsubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow cut" technique, inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

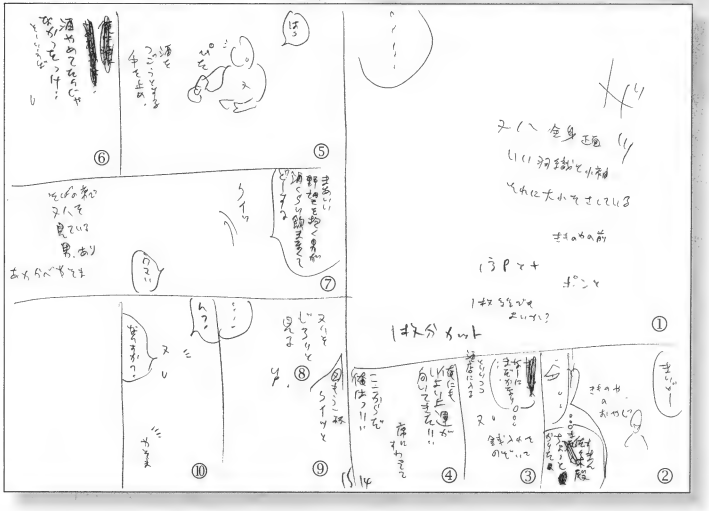
Takuan Sōhō (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism. By the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of Daitokuji, the leading temple of the Rinzai sect. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shōgun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyū Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship, entitled *The Unfettered Mind*, has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyū Clan
Yagyū Muneyoshi Sekishūsai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyū-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyū Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan, and in 1632 the Yagyū were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the daimyō. Although the Yagyū Clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *Lone Wolf and Cub* as the plotters of the downfall of Ittō Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyū Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyū Jūbei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evildoers.

Yoshioka Kempō (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the Sengoku period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempō mastered the Kyōhachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *Vagabond*, as well as in Yoshikawa's *Musashi*, Yoshioka Seijūrō and Denshichirō are Kempō's sons, who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

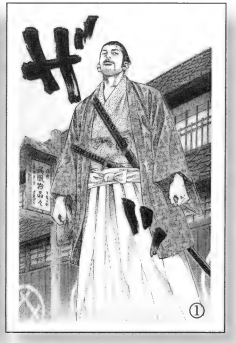
Vagabond Storyboards
A peek into the making of Vagabond

Chapter 56, pages 13 to 15









Panel ①
FX: Za (sound effect for a sudden or determined movement)
Notes: Full body frontal view of Matahachi. He's wearing a good quality *haori* jacket over a *kosode*-style kimono. He's carrying long and short swords. Standing in front of a kimono shop. Page 13. Looking impressive. Is one panel enough? Full page?

Panel ②
Balloon 1: Come again.
Notes: Proprietor of the kimono shop
Balloon 2: Sorry, Sir Sasaki. I borrowed a little more of your money.

Panel ③
Balloon 1: But there's still a lot left….
Notes: So he says as he enters a tavern. He's looking into his coin purse.
*The first kanji character of Matahachi's name (又) is used to indicate his location.

Panel ④
Caption upper right: My luck is finally changing!!
Caption upper left: This is just the beginning for me!!
Notes: He's taken a seat.

Panel ⑤
Balloon 1: exhale
Fx by hand: Pita (sound of liquid in container)
Notes: His hand stops before he pours.
*The figure in the panel is marked with (又).

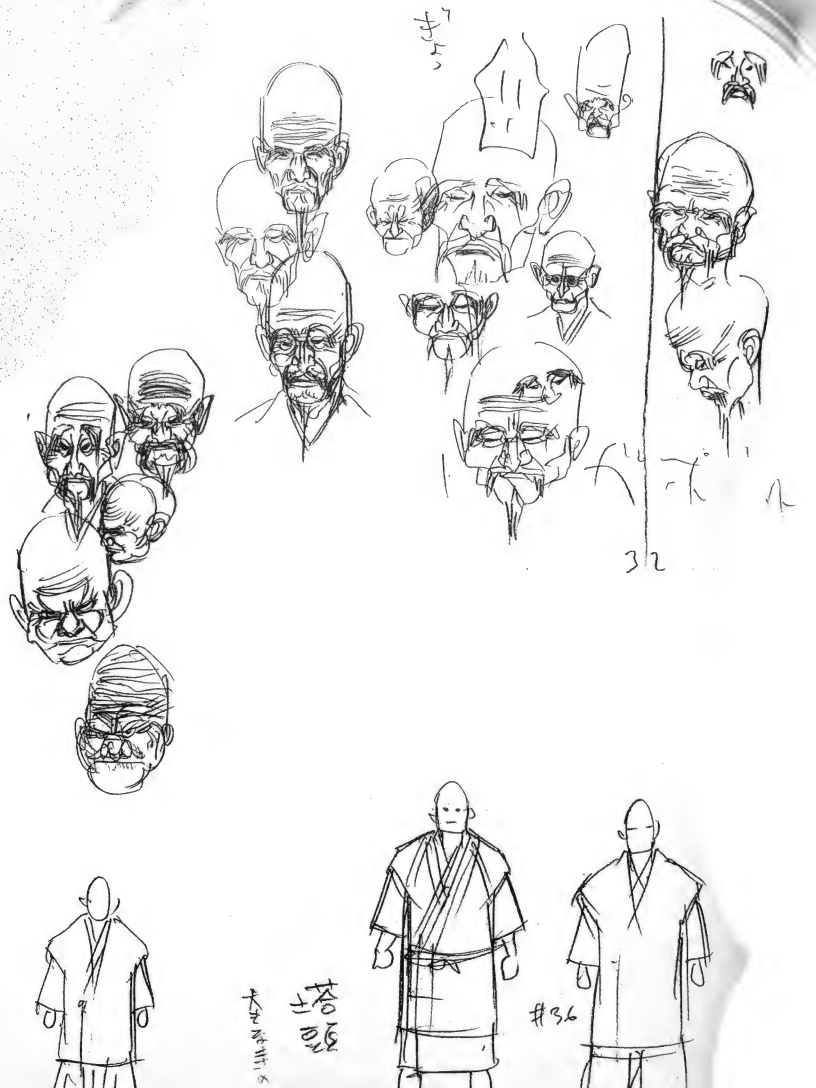
Panel ⑥
Caption: Didn't I quit drinking?

Panel ⑦
Balloon 1: That's okay. What's a man with ambition to do if he can't have a drink?
FX: Kui (sound of the cup's movement)
Balloon 2: Delicious
Notes: A man at the next table is looking at Matahachi. Akakabe Yasoma.

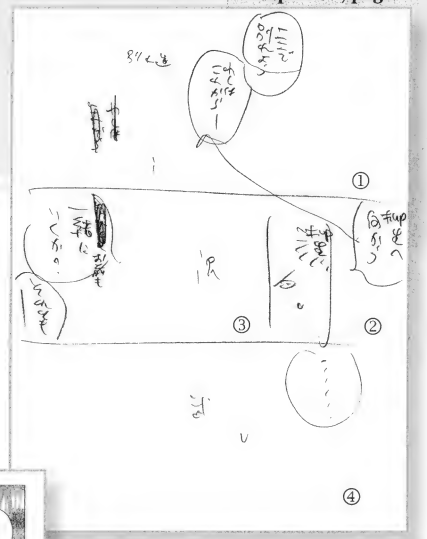
Panel ⑧
Notes: He glares at Matahachi.
Balloon 1: …

Panel ⑨
Notes: Matahachi takes another drink.

Panel ⑩
Balloon 1: Huh?
Balloon 2: What is it?
*Note the character location markers for Matahachi (又) and Yasoma (やそま).



Chapter 36, page 1





Panel ①
Notes: Fork in the road
Balloon 1: Let's part ways here
Balloon 2: I'm heading toward…
…the Yagyū.

Panel ②
Balloon 1: The Yagyū!
*Note the burst and the sweat mark on the storyboard and the finished page.

Panel ③
Balloon 1: Care to join me?
Balloon 2: Or…
*The first kanji character of Takuan's name (沢) is used here to mark Takuan's location in the panel.

Panel ④
Balloon 1: …
*The first kanji character of Musashi's name (武) is used to mark Musashi's location. Also note the sweat mark carried over from the storyboard to the finished page.

Author Comments

The following comments came from the dust jacket flaps of the Japanese graphic novel releases. They appear here translated into English for the first time for this VIZBIG Edition.

Volume 4

A lot of different things help with my work. Seeing a good movie inspires my creative drive. And if it weren't for my favorite music, I wouldn't be able to stay focused sitting at my desk for long periods of time. Also, nothing inspires me more than seeing a fine work of manga by an artist who has put his heart and soul into his work. The voices of people who read and are moved by work created in this way do reach the artists who create them. It is these voices that give me the determination to make my work even just a little bit better.

Volume 5

The word *vagabond* means "wanderer" or "drifter." It can have a negative "bad boy" connotation. I didn't want to use "Miyamoto Musashi" for the title of the series because I didn't want readers to have preconceived notions about the story before they even began to read the manga. Another reason is that Miyamoto Musashi is a person who actually existed in the past, and I feel a little guilty about doing whatever I wanted with his character.

Volume 6

On escaping—I'll go to several bookstores, then maybe a record store to look for some music, or maybe to buy a movie on DVD. Sometimes I'll go catch a movie. Then I'll go to a soba shop, have a drink, and look at all the books I've bought. Feeling the alcohol a bit, I'll go to another soba shop. This is a kind of ritual I do every week before I create my storyboards. It's how I escape and postpone the internal struggle I must put myself through in order to create. I'm just running away, and I realize this, but…people are weak.

Vagabond
Volume 2
VIZBIG Edition

Story & Art by
Takehiko Inoue
Based on Eiji Yoshikawa's *Musashi*

English Adaptation/Yuji Oniki
Touch-up & Lettering/Steve Dutro
VIZ Signature Series Design/Izumi Evers
VIZBIG Edition Design/Yukiko Kamematsu Whitley
Editor/Andy Nakatani

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RATED M FOR MATURE
PARENTAL ADVISORY
VAGABOND is rated M for Mature and is recommended for mature readers. This volume contains graphic violence and sexually explicit situations.
ratings.viz.com

Winner of the 2000 Media Arts Festival Award
Recipient of the 2000 Kodansha Award for Best Manga
Winner of the 2002 Tezuka Osamu Culture Award
Nominated for a 2003 Eisner Award for Best Writer/Artist

Praise for Takehiko Inoue

"Only an artist like Takehiko Inoue could take Japan's most historic samurai and bring him to life for Japanese and American audiences alike. In his hands, manga is fine art for everyone, Miyamoto Musashi is both human and hero, and *Vagabond* is flawless artistic storytelling."
—Kai-Ming Cha, *Publishers Weekly*

"This reads like an Akira Kurosawa film captured on the printed page. Takehiko Inoue's fine line art, much more detailed than the norm for Japanese manga, is a real treat, while the storyline captivates."
—Cliff Biggers, *Comic Buyer's Guide*

"More than just flesh-splitting battle scenes and mandala-like sequences of spiritual introspection, *Vagabond* seems to contain the entire world and span the entire human condition."
—Jason Thompson, *Manga: The Complete Guide*

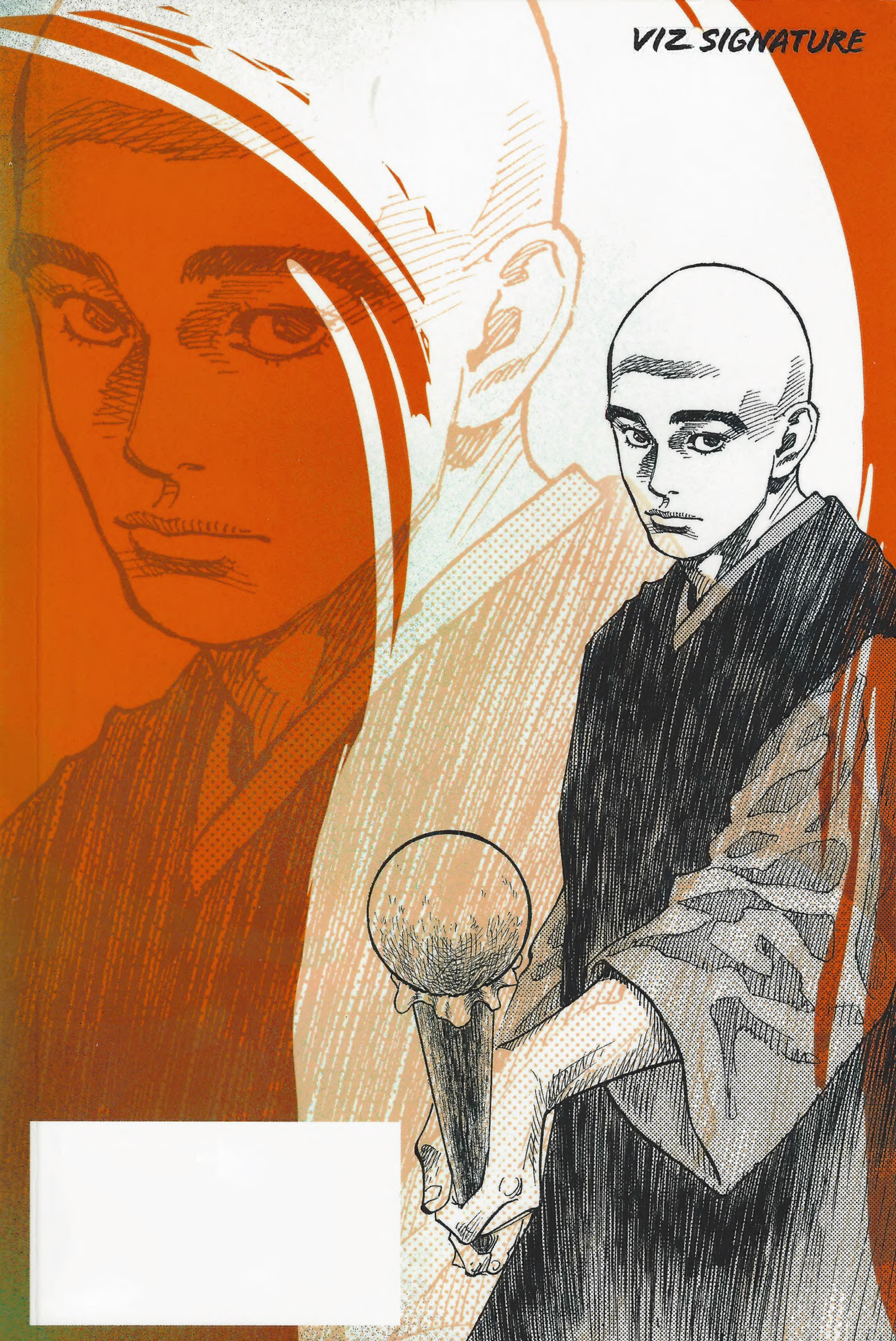
"An exquisitely rendered masterwork. The blood and sweat of feudal Japan have never felt as real as in Inoue's intricate linework. In a class well above nearly every other manga series on the market."
—Justin Sevakis, Anime News Network

"Inoue makes the carnage look like pure poetry in motion. *Vagabond* is more than bloody duels; it's also a meditation on the samurai spirit, and what it means to risk your life for your honor."
—Deb Aoki, About.com

"What makes *Vagabond* stand out, and makes this something more than just a retelling of Musashi's life, is Inoue's feel for characters, breathing life into figures who lived in a world so long ago and far away."
—Matt Brady, Newsarama



VIZ SIGNATURE



大 VIZBIG EDITION

Vagabond

Takehiko Inoue



viz media